MY FRIEND
THE INDIAN

MY FRIEND THE INDIAN

Putnam, McLaughlin and Buisson.

THE Superior EDITION OF

MY FRIEND THE INDIAN

by

James McLaughlin

with Paintings
by

Daniel S. Buisson

and

THE THREE MISSING CHAPTERS

with Preface and Epilogue
by

Reverend Louis L. Pfaller O.S.B.

A SALISBURY PRESS BOOK
by
Superior PUBLISHING COMPANY, SEATTLE

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Dedication

To Mrs. Alma Putnam,
niece of the James McLaughlin's and sister of
Daniel Shaw Buisson, whose interest and cooperation
brought this book to print.

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PUBLISHERS FOREWORD

Major James McLaughlin accepted the position of Indian Agent at the Devil's Lake Agency, Dakota Territory, in 1871 . . . his entrance into the field that was to become his life-long profession and consuming interest.

He and his wife, Marie Buisson McLaughlin, moved from their Mendota, Minnesota home to Devil's Lake with a shared enthusiasm, for she was one quarter Sioux, and had a deep feeling for Indian history and legend.

Following the Sioux uprising under Red Cloud, which ended with an unpopular treaty in 1868, there was a growing and foreboding unrest which eventually led to the Custer disaster on the Little Big Horn. McLaughlin knew the Indian leaders of the time, including Gall, Rain-in-the-Face, Sitting Bull and many of the other braves who fought in the battle.

He was transferred to Standing Rock Agency in 1881, and was there on December 15, 1890, when Sitting Bull was killed by a native policeman while resisting arrest. Later he was appointed Indian Inspector, and worked with Indian agencies and the reservations from Standing Rock, North Dakota, to Round Valley, California.

McLaughlin made "no claim to the literary graces", but inspired by his own and his friend's conviction that he had a message to send, and an obligation to fulfill for the red man, he wrote "My Friend the Indian," first published in 1910 by Houghton Mifflin.

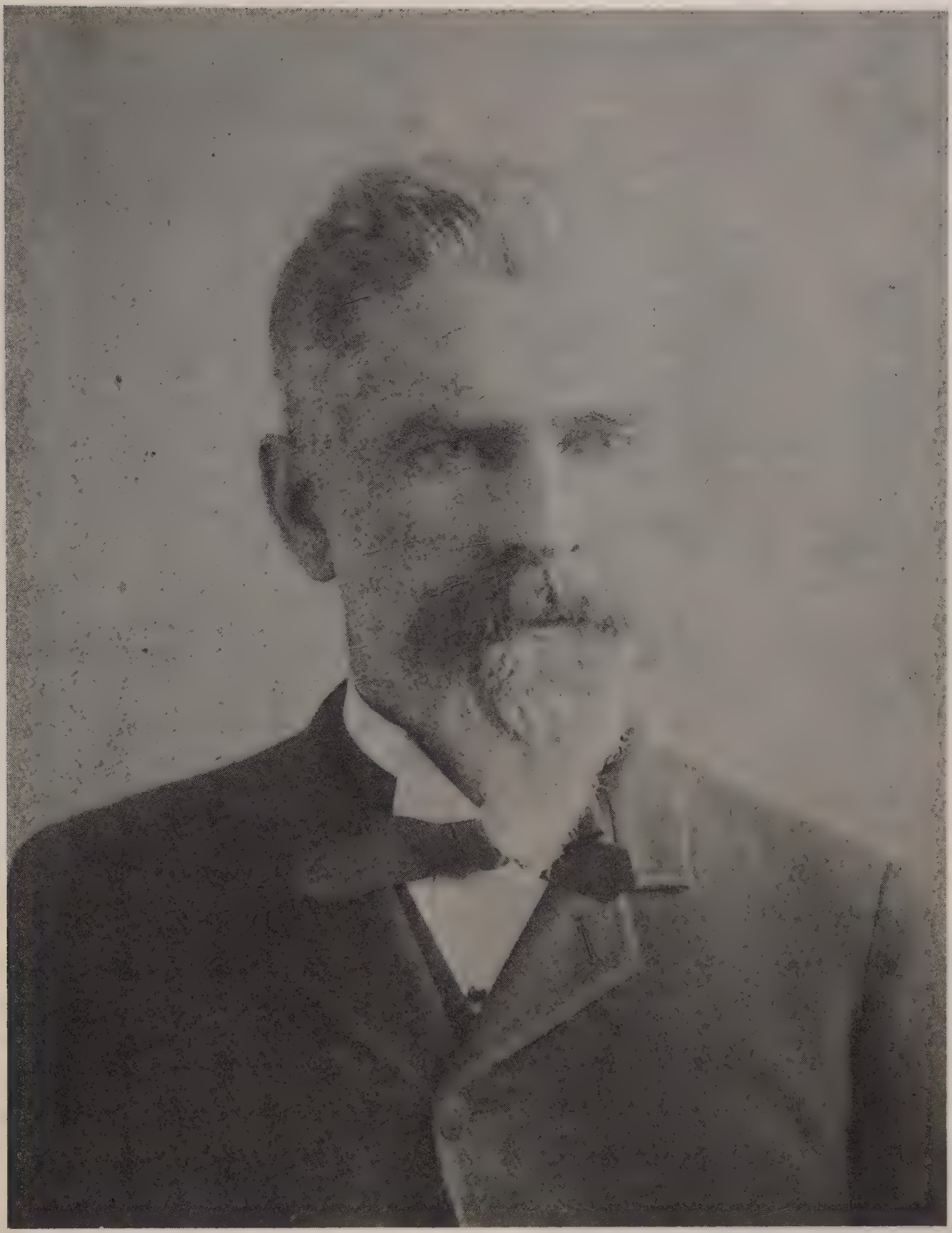
The story covers the period from shortly after the end of the Civil War until about the turn of the century. Even without the "graces" he told it honestly, simply, with great readability . . . and it carries a message.

Daniel Shaw Buisson, Mrs. McLaughlin's nephew, whose paintings appear in this book, certainly must have been influenced by his well known uncle, for they were close friends. But he was probably more strongly influenced in his feeling that he, too, had a mission, by the Indian blood that coursed through his veins from his great grandmother, Ha-za-ho-ta-win, a Sioux maiden who had married a Scottish trader.

Buisson's profession of Dentistry did not give him the same opportunities for close study of the Indians that his uncle had, but living in Montana he had many Indian friends. These, combined with visits with his uncle, and perhaps most of all the genes of Ha-za-ho-ta-win, caused the urgent feeling to grow. His mission was to deliver a message, first about his beloved Land of the Shining Mountains, and next about the human beings who peopled that land before the coming of the white man.

Buisson told his story with sketch pencil and paint brush . . . And like his uncle who laid no claim to "literary graces" Buisson laid no claim to artistic talent. In fact, so modest was he that he never exhibited his work, and only rarely showed it to a friend.

He kept his paintings piled in disorder, even under his bed, where they might be to this day, dust covered and forgotten, were it not



THE WRITER MAJOR JAMES McLAUGHLIN

for his sister, Mrs. Alma Putnam. She was determined that her brother's message, which she herself felt must be told, be made available for all to see.

With the emphasis today on racial values, it seems particularly fitting that McLaughlin's nearly forgotten written message, long out of print, should be reprinted here in combination with the never-before-in-print visual messages of his favorite nephew.

The two messages do not duplicate, but admirably complement each other.

Superior Publishing Company is happy and proud to be the message bearer.

Albert P. Salisbury, President
SUPERIOR PUBLISHING COMPANY

Daniel Shaw Buisson

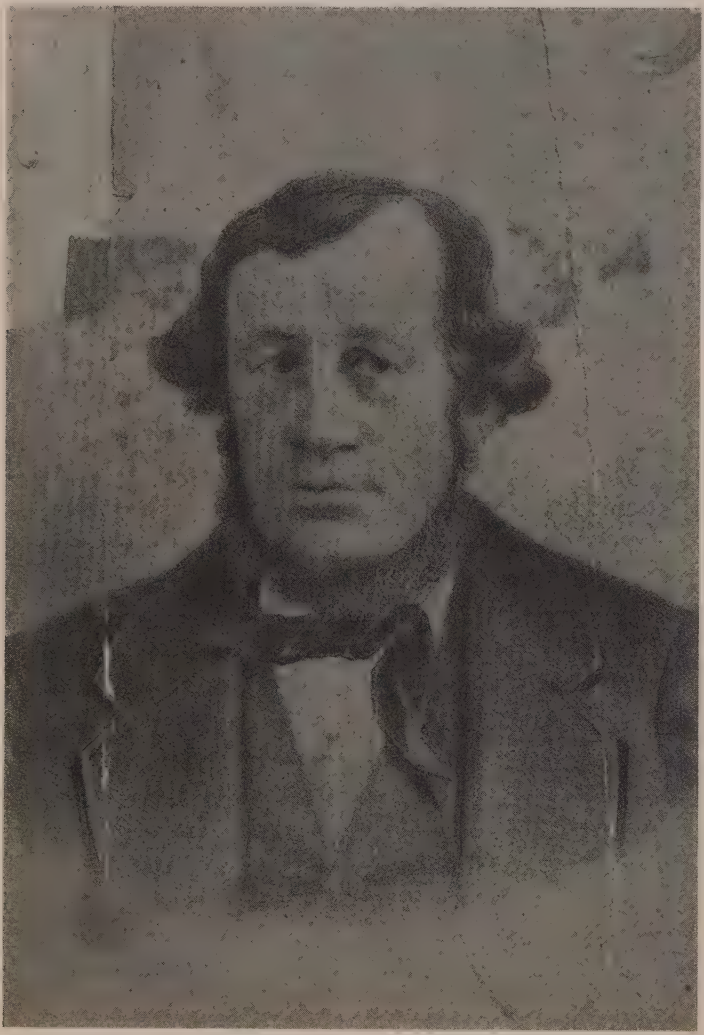
By

Archie Satterfield

The artist who gains recognition only after death is so common in the history of the Western Hemisphere that it has become a cliche. Daniel Shaw Buisson would fall into this category were it not for one variation on the theme: unlike the vast majority of artists, Buisson did not seek recognition during his lifetime; he avoided it.

And were it not for two people who loved him dearly, his paintings might have been destroyed and never published in book form or shown in exhibits.

The first person was his uncle, James McLaughlin, with whom Buisson always was close and who inspired him to concentrate most of his artistic output on the Native Americans. It was this relationship, both blood and personal, that brought about the publication of this book.



The second person is his sister, Mrs. Alma Putnam, who inherited Buisson's work after his death. Mrs. Putnam knew her brother was a talented artist, but had no idea of the scope of that talent until she found the paintings in his home after his death. Yet it has taken over 10 years for her to bring her brother's work before the public.

Only Mrs. Putnam can be consulted for biographical information on Buisson's life because he was a loner in the truest sense. Although he made a few close friends over the years, none of them could claim to really know Buisson. Mrs. Putnam doesn't either, but she has been able to piece together information that is in some cases sketchy, but is sufficient to establish him as a distinct individual.

He was born June 12, 1880, in Wabasha, Minnesota, the only son amid four daughters of Joseph Buisson, Jr., and Mary Elizabeth Stevens Buisson. He was named for Daniel Shaw, a wealthy Wisconsin businessman who loaned the elder Buisson $10,000 when Buisson was only 20 years old to begin the Valley Navigation Co., a steamboat company that moved log rafts up and down the Mississippi River between St. Croix and downriver sawmills, and ran excursions in the summer. For many years Shaw gave the Buissons $100 every Christmas, even after Buisson became a successful businessman.

Daniel Shaw Buisson's mother was English, but on his father's side he inherited a combination of Sioux, French and Scot blood. His great-grandmother was Ha-za-ho-ta-win, a full-blooded member of the Medawakanton band of the Sioux. She and Captain Duncan Graham, who was a member of a Scottish Highland party that founded Selkirk Colony, near Lake Winnipeg, were married a short time after his arrival in 1811.

A Frenchman and trader with the American Fur Company, Joseph Buisson, Sr., married one of the Grahams' daughters and they had four sons, including Joseph, Jr., the father of the artist and Mrs. Putnam.

The senior Buisson, Daniel's grandfather, was a wealthy fur trader, a heavy drinker and was not a model husband and father. He had a penchant for getting roaring drunk, coming home and breaking up the furniture and anything else that caught his eye. Then he would sober up and buy new furniture.

Joseph Buisson French trader of American Fur Co. (Canada).

He never permitted his sons to leave the ranch, out was generous with money to them. Finally, he family tired of his drinking — the sons objected to being "remittance men" — and they packed up their mother and belongings and took her away. Joseph, Sr., was never mentioned after that and none of the sons ever asked him for money. He died before his wife, the latter living to the age of 92, and on her death, the sons had his remains moved to a plot beside her at Wabasha.

One of Mrs. Putnam's earliest memories is of being taunted by other children for having one-eighth Indian ancestry, and it wasn't until after her marriage that she stopped blaming that ancestry for everything unpleasant that happened to her.

"I often told my father that the Indian blood ruined a good family," she recalls.

"He would answer that one day we would be proud of that blood."

Apparently Daniel Shaw Buisson always was proud of his mixed blood, and if the taunts irritated him, he didn't show it. His self-possession was apparent from childhood on, as were his artistic abilities. Drawing and painting always was a hobby with him, and during his school years he frequently earned spending money by making drawings for his friends to turn in as classroom assignments. He also had a darkroom in a shed beside the house with a "Keep Out" sign and took thousands of photographs of rodeos and bullfights in Mexico, both of which were strange considering his love of animals.

When he became old enough, he worked on his father's sternwheelers every summer as clerk and paymaster for excursions. His father commented that he could make change faster than anyone he had ever hired, but worried about another way he handled money: the youngster loved to play poker with the loggers after payday, an avocation that earned him the nickname of "the kid gambler." His father worried about his safety because the loggers were a tough bunch.

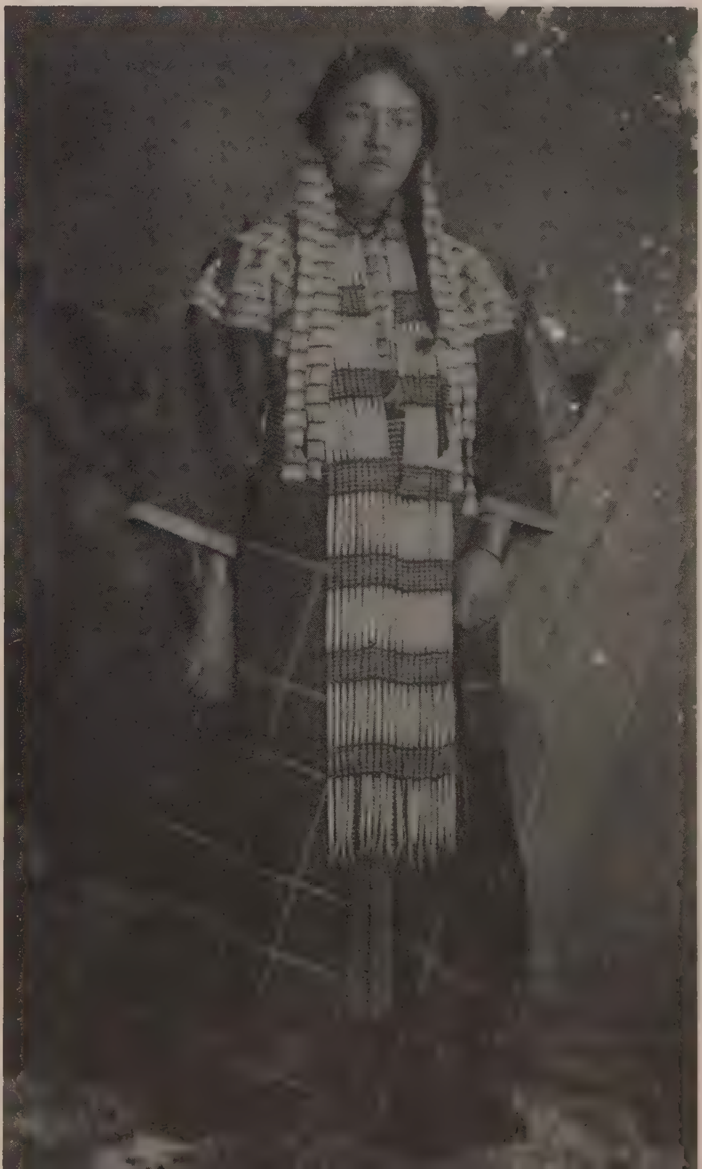
But he was always a solitary boy with perhaps one close friend. He was pleasant to everyone but confided in none. He had a subtle sense of deadpan humor and was never heard to laugh aloud, apparently believing a slight smile was enough levity.

He did have a violent temper while young that was literally explosive. Once his mother had to pull him off a violin teacher who had corrected his technique in an offensive way. Buisson responded by breaking an expensive violin over the teacher's back and pouncing on him. He did the same thing to a Sunday School teacher once over a dispute long forgotten, and when he was irritated short of the point of violence, he would pace back and forth. His sisters named him the "Chicago walker."

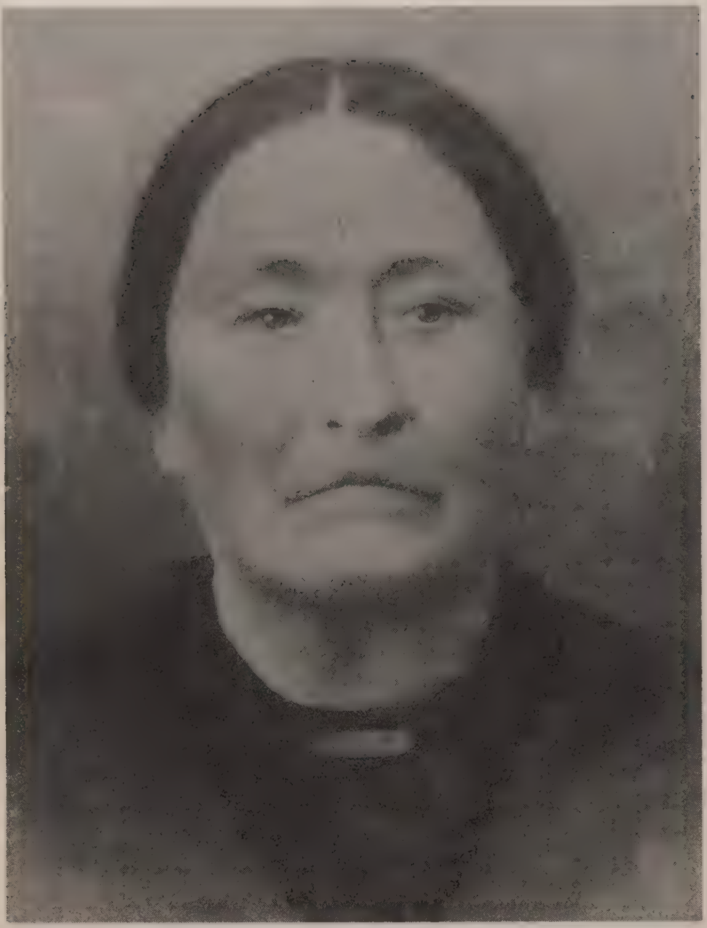
In later years, he returned to his mother's church and was confirmed in St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Townsend. He became very close to the Rev. E. Krohn of the church, perhaps closer than to any member of his family.

He grew into a tall man with traces of the Indian blood showing in his olive complexion and a slight slant in his eyes. Some thought him handsome; others did not. He was fond of good clothes, and Mrs. Putnam says he could emerge from a dressing room looking like a page out of Esquire Magazine, but would leave the room in a shambles.

During his youth he also spent a great deal of time on his Uncle James McLaughlin's ranch, the



Nancy Lucy Graham daughter of Capt. Duncan Graham and wife of Joseph Buisson. She is dressed in the wedding dress of her Sioux mother.



Nancy Lucy Graham Buisson

Mrs. Marie Buisson McLaughlin

Circle M, and the Standing Rock Reservation, where he first learned the heritage of the Indians and respect for them from his favorite uncle. McLaughlin, with his affectation for a cane and silk hat, and the vanity and self-confidence only a handsome and competent man can display, undoubtedly was the major source of Buisson's sense of direction for his artistic impulse.

During his high school years he began hanging around doctors' offices and helping them whenever possible, and after graduation, attended the Chicago School of Dentistry, completing the course in three years. That he was an excellent dentist from the very beginning is evidenced by one of his early patients — his father. He replaced a crown on a tooth that previously had refused to hold one. Buisson's crown lasted the rest of his father's life. And he later won numerous awards for his skills at conventions.

But Buisson never really cared for dentistry. It simply was a method of making a living, even though he practiced for several years in Minneapolis before getting the urge to go west.

His talents and interests weren't limited to dentistry and art. He also tried his hand at inventing, and while he was in the hospital with his final illness, was working on an invention that everyone who visits a hospital must wish he had lived to complete — a toilet seat specially for hospital patients. He was a stamp collector and trader with an excellent collection; raised imported rabbits; was an able stonecutter; was a learned naturalist and his love and understanding for animals is shown in his paintings, sketches and carvings. "In 20 or 30 minutes he could change a block of wood into a beautiful carving," his sister said.

He also was an excellent cook. Every Christmas he would send his relatives canned fish and foul, and mountain berry jelly. In return, they always sent him hand-tailored, white nightshirts, which he preferred over other nightclothes.

When his partner in the successful Minneapolis practice died, rather than staying on to become even more successful, Buisson closed the office and went first to Chester, Mont., and later to Havre, Montana. He stayed there with offices in Chester and Havre a few years then moved on to Townsend because of the mining activity there.

"He thought he was a businessman," Mrs. Putnam says, "but he was an artist. I burned a bushel of worthless investments he had lying around the house after he died. He made some money on the mining investments, but then he'd turn around and lose it all."

When Buisson was in his early 30s, he married Mary O'Connor, a nurse from Minnesota who took out a land claim near the Missouri (as Buisson had earlier at Havre), "proved it up" and sold it.

They were childless, and the new Mrs. Buisson frankly didn't think highly of his artistic leanings or his habit of going off for days at a time without telling her where he was. Usually he was on an Indian reservation or at a pow-wow sometimes as far away as Minnesota. That the Indians liked him is shown in the large number of gifts they gave him over the years, but it couldn't have made a good impression on a wife who wanted her husband home more.

His commitment to art was further enforced by his friendship with the famous painter, Charles Russell, whom he painted twice. Over the years Buisson's painting became accepted in Montana earning him the nickname "The Painting Dentist of Montana," by which many casual acquaintances knew him.

Yet he never tried to sell or exhibit his work during his lifetime, and if he took them very seriously, he didn't show it: Mrs. Putnam found some stashed under his bed like old newspapers or pieces of driftwood gathered and ignored.

Nor would he accept commissions. He received and rejected several offers for portraits (at which he was a master), magazine covers, and on one occasion turned down an opportunity to live a life of leisure while painting. A wealthy Californian who had seen his work offered him a place to live in California, a comfortable income with the only stipulation that he paint when he felt like it. He refused without a moment's hesitation.

"I won't punch the time-clock for anyone," he told his sister.

On another occasion a missionary priest visited Buisson, hoping to see his paintings. Buisson said his sister (Mrs. Putnam) had them all in California.

His last years were not happy ones. His parents and three of his sisters died before him, leaving only he and Mrs. Putnam. Then his wife died in 1949, and Buisson appeared to withdraw even more than in the past. It was after his wife's death that he told Mrs. Putnam he no longer could kill a deer, even though he loved hunting before.

He had a leg ailment that curtailed his outings and it progressed to the point that he had to wear leather braces on his legs, and at the last, confined him to a wheelchair. It was about this time that

Daniel Buisson about three years

Daniel Buisson about eighteen

W
W
W
W
W
W
W
ASCO
H.S.

As a football player. Buisson is second from the left, front row.

As A Duck hunter

he told a friend that he was going to "live as an Indian and die as an Indian."

This perhaps explains his secretiveness toward his sister. She was never told what was wrong with him and he refused to let her visit him shortly before his death.

"But Dan," she protested, "we're the only Buisson's left."

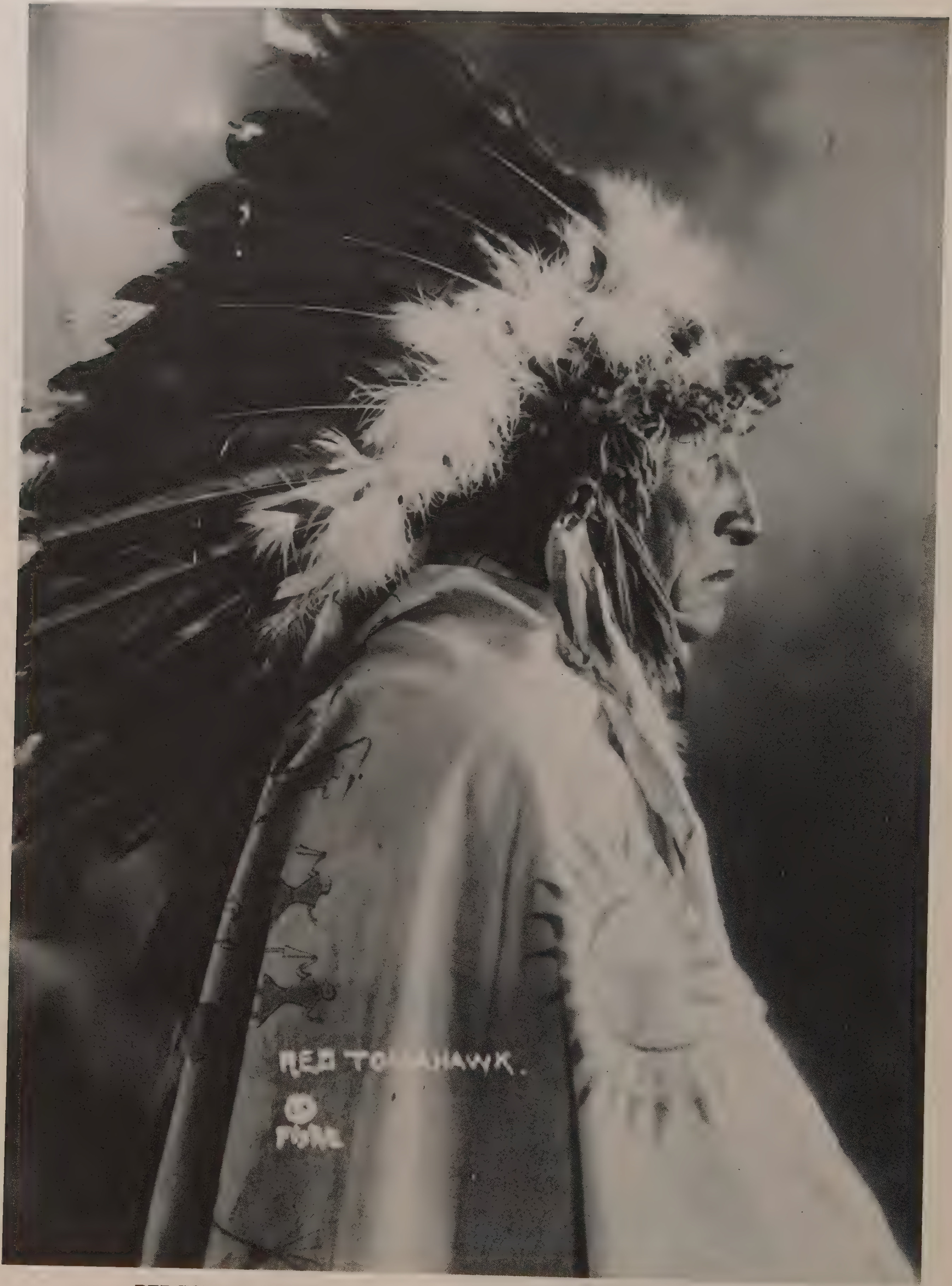
"You've always been different from me," he replied, which she believes had something to do with his statement about living like an Indian.

He died August 10, 1958, an artist who lived much as he wanted to: an artist who knew and understood the Indians and had their respect; an artist who had a deep compulsion to record those Indians, if not for the sake of posterity, at least for his own satisfaction. Just why he did not care if his paintings gained public recognition probably will never be known. However, he was careful to leave his belongings to his sister, each artifact carefully labeled in trunks.

The paintings in this book, reproduced here for the first time, leave no doubt that "The Painting Dentist of Montana" made an important contribution to our national heritage.

It appears that Mary O'Connor Buisson did not share her husband's enthusiasm for Indian regalia.

THE ARTIST DANIEL SHAW BUISSON


RED TOMAHAWK.
FISKE

RED TOMAHAWK THE INDIAN POLICEMAN WHO KILLED SITTING BULL.
Fiske photo - Courtesy Assumption Abbey Archives.

MY FRIEND THE INDIAN

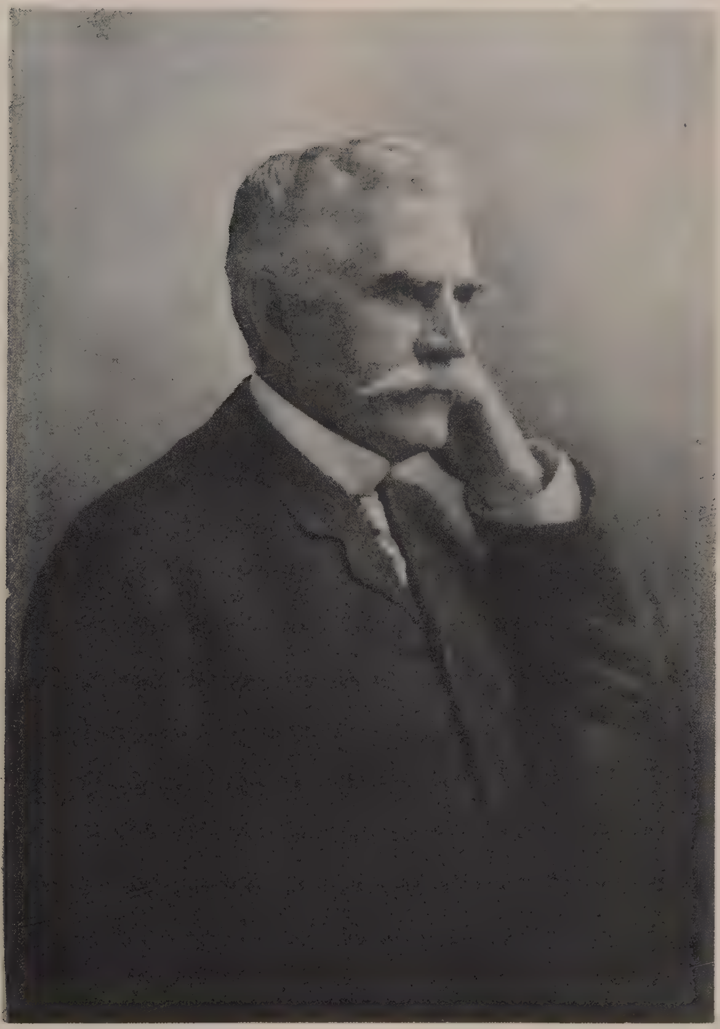
BY

JAMES McLAUGHLIN

UNITED STATES INDIAN INSPECTOR
FORMERLY AGENT TO THE SIOUX AT DEVILS LAKE
AND STANDING ROCK AGENCIES
NORTH DAKOTA

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

TO MY FRIEND THE INDIAN
WHOSE GOOD PARTS SURVIVE
AS A MONUMENT OVER THE
GRAVES OF A VANISHING RACE



JAMES McLAUGHLIN
U. S. Indian Inspector

PREFACE

A WORD of explanation may be granted a man who has spent the greater part of a rather busy life in fields far remote from literary labor, and who now finds himself thrust into a position where he and his motives may be misjudged.

Let me say that this work was not undertaken without serious thought and many misgivings. Not that I had no story to tell, but that I doubted my capacity to put into readable form the things I have seen or had a part in, and the conclusions I have drawn from my observations. For thirty-eight years I have lived among, or had official dealings with, a race of people little understood by the whites who have displaced them in carrying out the immutable law of the survival of the fittest. It is not the least of my possessions that I hold the confidence of these people. I may say now that in the following pages I have said nothing that will jeopardize the relation that is as a bond between the red men of the West and me.

My friends in official and private life have been good enough to assume that what I know of the Indian, of his losing struggle for an existence according to his own ideals, of his manner of living, mode of thought, habit in action and repose, and of the things that have happened to him on the long trail he has traveled in the processes of evolution since I first became intimate with him on the plains of Dakota in 1871, might be worth setting down for the information of my contemporaries and the correction of some errors which are, unfortunately, but too common. Under the constant urging of these perhaps too partial friends, this work was undertaken. I had thought to use the autobiographical style throughout, but it was so necessary to incorporate in the work momentous occurrences in which I had no part, but which were described to me by the red men who participated in them, that I have not always adhered to this style. The things I have related of my own knowledge may be depended upon as being as nearly correct as may be, allowing for human defects; those other — and perhaps more important — matters which are given on the relation of the participants, tell the Indian's side of many a disputed event. I have exercised due care to accept no statement of fact, unless the person responsible for it was known to me to be worthy of credence.

The following pages were written at agencies and training-schools in many reservations, from Standing Rock, North Dakota, to Round Valley, California. I do not know that they carry the atmosphere in which the events treated occurred and were written of, but I do know that sincerity of purpose, strengthened by the environment of Indian life as it is to-day, has actuated the writing of every word. And the work must stand as it is — or fall.

Following as I do in the footsteps of the men of distinction in the learning of the books and the fields who have written of the Indian as he is and as he is not, I must throw upon the shoulders of these partial friends, who urged me to this work, the responsibility for my emergence from the gloom of the council-fire, from the sordid surroundings of the Indian of to-day, into the limelight of that publicity which shines on the man who has the temerity to put himself into a book. I can make no claim to the use of those literary graces which might adorn a tale, but I have tried in this writing to discharge what I have been told is a duty. If the contention is made that I have written from the Indian rather than from the white man's point of view, then I have no rejoinder to make, but am willing to rest content in the knowledge that I have done justice to "My Friend the Indian."

MY FRIEND THE INDIAN

CHAPTER I

MOVING INTO THE INDIAN COUNTRY

Wherein the Personal Element is Necessarily Obtruded — Changes that have come about in a Generation — Leaving St. Paul for Fort Totten — Five Hundred Miles by Bull-Team — Getting Acquainted with the Indians.

For thirty-eight years I have been saying "How" to the Indian man rather more frequently than I have been permitted to salute the white man according to his forms. When first, as an employee of the government, I answered the grave salutation of the red man, the buffalo roamed at will over the great plains of the Sioux country; the Indian stood just without the threshold of civilization; the mailed fist of the military was cuffing the untutored men of the grass-lands into a sense of the beneficence of the peace policy inaugurated by General Grant; the iron horse had not crossed the Minnesota boundary; the dull, plodding ox was the courier and herald of the culture that was stowed in embryo in the prairie schooner; Chicago was just beginning to throw off its swaddling-clothes under a blanket of smoke; St. Paul was the frontier to the northwest, and bad men flourished in the towns to the west and south on the borderland beyond the Missouri; Jim Fisk was a king in Wall Street, and the uncrowned kings of the people who lived in tepees were entirely ignorant of the existence of the lords of high finance.

And that was only a generation ago. In the span of a life whose better years have been spent very close to the scent of the tepee smoke, I have seen the Indian prostrated by the hand he kissed, and biting the hand that fed him; I have held savage passions in check when the Indian stood ready to spring in bloody protest on the white man whose coming he resented and whose beneficent intent he did not understand. I have, even more frequently, stood between the white man and the Indian whose rights he contemplated taking from him by the processes of what we have come to describe as benevolent assimilation. While I enjoyed and still enjoy the friendship of white men who are very dear to me, I have done many things that were dictated rather by a sense of the rights of the red man than by the promptings of racial affiliation, and I hold to nothing more firmly, am proud of nothing so much as of the fact that my red friends of the West have given me the title of friend.

It is a small thing to be proud of, some one will say, the friendship of the Indian. I say it is much to have been able to guide the uncertain steps of a simple people across the threshold of civilization, and help to lead them to a realization of the domination of the white man and the impending extinction of their race as an element in the great affairs of men; to have been able to help convince the Indian that he would gain by bartering his position as a free agent following the dictates of his nature and keeping to the traditions and lands of his ancestors. I would not be understood as claiming for myself any undue prominence in this work: I was part of the machine organized by the government for the civilization of the Indian, and as a part of that organization I did the work that was appointed me by such means as I could devise. The predecessors of my generation of Indian officials, men of heart and brain and brawn, who had the pioneer work among the Indians, accomplished much as individuals, notwithstanding the fact that they had been isolated. When I entered the service the military arm was the only power that appealed to the Indian. To the men of my time was appointed the task of taking the raw and bleeding material which made the hostile strength of the plains Indians, of bringing that material to the mills of the white man, and of transmuting it into a manufactured product that might be absorbed by the nation without interfering with the national digestion. In doing my part toward bringing about this transmutation, I went to the Indian, instead of sitting in my office and waiting for the Indian to come to me. The duty was not always congenial; it sometimes led to things and places that I would not have elected to seek out. But it all brought me very close to the red man. I believe I came to understand Indian human nature; I found that, under the blanket in which the Indian shrouded himself, there was a heart and mind altogether human, but undeveloped. I believe that the Indian was a man before outrage and oppression made him a savage. I have known him as a savage, a fighting man, in the pride and insolence of his strength; I have known him as a sage in council, then as a beggar with the pride starved out of him. I have sat with him at his feasts and councils. I have not asked more of him than he could give, nor promised more than I could fulfill. It must not be supposed that I took this attitude from motives higher than have inspired other men who have dealt with the Indian. It was early made manifest to me that the policy of simple honesty was the only possible policy to apply to commerce with the red man.

I say these things, not in a vainglorious spirit, but to justify myself in asserting a right to the title of friend of the Indian. If I have come to know the Indian intimately and understandingly, I have earned the right to tell of him as I know him, and these pages are justified.

In the later sixties an impossible condition had arisen in the relations of the white man and the Indian. The Caucasian had wheeled the car of progress up to the border of the Indian land, and had been compelled to halt until the red man had been coerced, cajoled, or compelled to get out of the way. Coercion and cajolery had been pretty well worn out on the Indian, and he had come to some sort of knowledge of the fact that he must make a stand. During the Civil War, and in the unsettled period succeeding it, he had broken loose from the leading-strings of the agents and had things pretty much his own way. His roaming had not been materially interfered with, and there is no doubt that he felt very well able to take care of himself without any guidance from the white man. The care that had been bestowed upon him when he consented, theretofore, to render himself amenable to the arguments offered — backed by fleshpots — by the whites, was not just what would appeal to any man, white or red. There had been a good deal of chicanery in the administration of Indian affairs. He had been starved into rebellion and beaten — sometimes — into submission. But during the war he had tasted again the delights of practically unhampered freedom. That this freedom took the form of horrid license at times was shown by the awful outbreaks indulged in on the frontiers. Those of the Indians who lived in countries which were not yet desired by the whites were living a wild, free life in the midst of what they regarded as plenty. There is no doubt that the roving bands were a menace to travel on the plains, and that they would have to be put on reservations if the white man was to be permitted to carry out the great promise of which the time was pregnant.

The entire regular army — or practically all of it — was afield in pursuit of the Indians. General Sheridan, whose opinion of the people he was engaged in checking or fighting was summed in the phrase, "There are no good Indians but dead Indians," was in command in the field on the frontier. General Sherman, whose notion of dealing with the Indian was expressed in the statement that they must be suppressed by "merciless and vindictive warfare," was at the head of the army. These same sentiments, as regarded the whites, were evidently held to by the chiefs of the fierce and warlike tribes of Teton Sioux, the Cheyennes, Comanches, Kiowas, Apaches, and others, whose business was the chase primarily, but plunder and war when ill-treatment gave excuse for reprisals. In view of the expressed sentiments of the great military leaders of the times, the attitude of the Indian is not calculated to cause great surprise — viewed now at a distance of thirty-five or forty years. At the time of the accession of General Grant to the presidency every man's hand was raised against the Indian, and, it must be admitted, the Indian had his hand raised against white men generally. I do not mean that all the Indians were inclined to the warpath, but the greater portion of the warlike tribes were afield and ready for trouble.

And they were a very different body of men, physically, from the Indians of to-day. They wore an air of sturdy independence. They were equipped according to their natural requirements. Their minds were generally attuned to magnificent ideas of time and distance. They abhorred the limitations that the white man accepts as affecting his dwelling-place. They were foes to be reckoned with, or they might be converted into friends worth the having. It is a matter for profound regret that the Indian of that day could not have been advanced to his present knowledge of, and capacity for, civilized pursuits without being subjected to the debasing and degenerating physical and moral conditions that were inseparable from the processes of transmutation.

Just previous to the inauguration of General Grant, commissions, composed largely of military men, had proposed treaties to the more important of the tribes. They had accepted the treaties, or some of their chiefs had; and when General Grant, in his inaugural, proclaimed the peace policy in dealing with the Indian, there was a fair prospect that the shedding of blood on the frontier would cease. And it might have ceased if the Indian could have been protected from his fool friends in authority, and the white man freed in the smallest degree from the promptings of cupidity that would tolerate no delay in grasping the riches that had been the portion of the red man.

From the time of the signing of the treaties of 1868 up to the date of my entrance into the Indian service, in 1871, there had been very large accessions to the number of Indians living at the agencies. On the extreme frontier there had been fighting, and many isolated but bloody encounters took place. But the Indian was different from what he had been a few years previously. In the language of the bounding West in which he made his habitat, it may be said that, in 1871, the Indian was "halter-broke but he had not yet been bitted." That was to come later, when the bloody arbitrament of war had been appealed to and the mighty tide of white men had engulfed and submerged the red bands that stood in the way to the setting sun and fortune. The operation of the law of the survival of the fittest has not been applied, according to the Indian canons of fitness, and the great men of the red race, the last of a race of physical giants, have passed away in the years that have intervened since 1871. They have not yet been succeeded by the race of mental giants that should follow them. But in the process of eliminating the big men of the race, some stirring events took place. In some of these events I had a part, of many I was an interested observer. And the relation of these events will properly include the story of the passing of the Indian of yesterday.

Born in 1842, in the province of Ontario, of Irish and Scotch ancestry, — an accident of birth the distinction of which I gladly share with some millions of my contemporaries, — I arrived in Minnesota in 1863, with two strong, bare hands, and entered into an apprenticeship for a career among the Indians by becoming acquainted with many of them and of their mixed bloods at St. Paul, Mendota, Wabasha, Faribault, and other places in that then frontier state. I had acquired some slight knowledge of the Sioux language, and when, in 1871, Major W. H. Forbes was appointed agent at Devils Lake agency, in what is now North Dakota, and offered me a place, with virtual charge of the outfit he was taking into the Sioux country, I was in some measure equipped for the position by an understanding of the manners and customs of the Sioux. Looking back down the vista of years, I see now that I was not nearly so well equipped for a life among the Indians as I thought I was when I mounted a horse and navigated a bull-train of twenty yoke of cattle and ten wagons out through the streets of St. Paul in the early morning of July 1, 1871.

The expedition started from the present location of the Hotel Ryan, St. Paul, and it had taken many days and nights of hard work to equip the train with the numerous articles necessary for the establishment of a post beyond the outskirts of civilization. St. Paul was not the metropolis then that it is now. There were outfitting places enough, and a bull-train starting for the frontier was not such a rare sight as to prompt the inhabitants to get out of bed to see us off.

Major Forbes, who was a Christian gentleman and a good friend, was quite prominent in the Northwest in those days. He had been chief commissary of subsistence under General H. H. Sibley during the Indian troubles, in war-time, in Minnesota, and had served as president of the territorial council and postmaster at St. Paul. He was closely connected with the leading men of his state, counting among his closest friends General H. H. Sibley, Governor Alexander Ramsey, Right Reverend John Ireland, now archbishop of St. Paul, Commodore N. W. Kittson, and General John B. Sanborn. His health was not good at the time he was appointed to the Devils Lake agency, and it was understood that the work would largely fall upon me — understood, at least, by Major Forbes.

Devils Lake is situated something like a hundred miles west of the Red River of the North, in North Dakota. From time immemorial it had been the resort of the Sioux, the natural phenomena manifested in and about the lake appealing to the superstitions of the Indians. It was called by the Sioux "Minnewaukon," spirit, or sacred water — suffering in the translation as so many of the Sioux names of people and places did. The lake, strongly impregnated with salts and iron, is very brackish, and there are innumerable whirlpools, all of which were attributed by the Sioux to the activity of the spirit that had its abode in the lake and the surrounding country. While the phenomena that were not understood may have menaced the Indian through his superstitious fears, the material attractions of the country quite overshadowed the immaterial drawbacks. It was a great buffalo country. The mighty bison roamed the undulating prairie in uncounted numbers, moving in very early days up to and along the Red River and the Canadian lakes, and then away down to the great plains to the southwest. As the settlement along the Red River drove the buffalo back out of the valley, the great herds made the Canadian boundary, or thereabouts, the limit of their grazing land, and in the fifties and sixties they occupied the country around Big Stone Lake, the James River valley, and westward over to and beyond the Missouri River. In the country about Devils Lake they had been very numerous, and had lingered there until the Red River half-breeds and Indians became too thick, disappearing from that country in 1868.

The Red River half-breeds had for many years made Devils Lake the scene of the summer hunts. They were descendants of the French *voyageurs*, who had married the daughters of the northern tribes and who had grown greatly in numbers and established for themselves a local habitation on the Red River, after the founding of the headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company, at, or near, what is now Winnipeg. They were a happy-go-lucky lot, leading an easy-going existence in the Indian style when they were abroad, and after the fashion of the frontier white man in their permanent habitations. Some day, some one will arise who will write the epic of the Red River half-breed, and the world will be the richer for a knowledge of these people, half Indian, half French, having the capacity for endurance of the one race and the vivacity and appreciation of enjoyment of the other, — of their devotion to primitive Christianity on the one hand and their wild indifference to all trammels on the other. They trapped in the winter, did service as *voyageurs* and freighters, and hunted the buffalo for the hides and pemmican. They did all the freighting for the old fur companies, and the screeching protest of the wooden axles of the carts, which they formed into trains miles long, could be heard on the prairie long before the outfit came into sight, their carts being built entirely of wood, with no ironwork whatever in the construction, not even an iron nail being used. The preparation of pemmican may not have originated with the Red River half-breeds, but they most assuredly preserved the art of making it. Pemmican was made of buffalo-meat, which was dried and then pounded into pulp; hides of buffalo calves were made into sacks that were quite impervious; the sacks were filled with the lean meat; the tallow of the animals slaughtered was then melted and poured into the sacks, the tops sewed up, and when the mass hardened it would keep almost indefinitely. Pemmican formed the most nutritious and easily portable article of food, and was of great value to travelers who made long distances over plains where meat could not always be obtained. It was the article of diet most to be depended upon, and with very little pemmican in his pack, a plainsman could travel an incredible distance without fear of lacking ample subsistence. In the neighborhood of Devils Lake, an enormous quantity of this frontier delicacy was made and sold to the Hudson's Bay and American Fur companies.

These half-breeds made a permanent camp on the south side of Devils Lake, and used that for a base in their hunting expeditions, and here they had lived for years, generally on excellent terms with the nomad Indians who hunted in the same country. It was for the purpose of locating these wandering bands of Indians that the reservation had been established on the south side of Devils Lake. The Indians roamed that section of the country from beyond the Minnesota border to away up north of the international boundary — not yet surveyed and defined. The Cut Head, Yanktonai, and bands of Santees were numerous enough. Some of them were people who had been frightened out of the vicinity of the Minnesota settlements by the depredations of their kinsmen of the Medawakanton, Wahpakoota, Sisseton, and Wahpeton bands during the Minnesota Massacre, in 1862. They were without a reservation home, and they congregated at Devils Lake, on the appointed reservation, voluntarily. It had been provided in the establishment of the reservation, that when five hundred Indians had gathered there an agent should be appointed. A military post had already been established and garrisoned by United States troops. About this post, or in the neighborhood, about seven hundred Indians had congregated, and it was to minister to these people that I started from St. Paul that morning in July thirty-eight years ago.

My old friends of the frontier would remember a trip with a bull-team across the meadow-like prairies of northwestern Minnesota and Dakota in the early seventies as a sort of progressive picnic — forgetting the heart-breaking encounters with oxen that would not move when they should, and could not be headed off when a sudden stop was needful; the breaking down in places far remote from repair-shops, and the remedying of the breaks according to first principles in travel; the camping in a strange country; the pursuit of runaway cattle. They are all a joke to me now, and the story would not at all appeal to the man who leaves St. Paul, Minnesota, in a Pullman on the palatial Northern Pacific train about midnight, and eats his late breakfast before he reaches Jamestown, North Dakota, in the morning; so I am not going to dwell on that trip of five hundred miles. There were in the party Andy Atkinson of Faribault, wagon-maker; Hypolite Dupis, a character and frontiersman who came into the country in 1831; Ben Nesbitt, a colored man, who was an object of much curiosity to the Indians of the plains. He was one of the few black men in that part of the Indian country in those days. There was another, named Isaiah, who had lived among the Standing Rock Indians for many years, and who was killed in the Custer battle. He was with the white forces, and the Indians took a horrible revenge on his corpse when they found that he was among the dead soldiers. Two others, Haines and Lechner, white men, made up the list of employees.

The country through which the trail led, after I left St. Cloud, Minnesota, lay in a general way along the road that had been established as a post-route, which led away to the west, through Dakota and Montana, and up into Idaho, reaching the mining-camps. In 1867 and 1868, military posts had been established at different points along the route, with a view to protecting the mail-carriers from the marauding Indians. Major Charles Ruffee, now of Brainard, Minnesota, had the mail contract, and he had suffered great losses from the spoliation to which he had been subjected by roaming or hostile bands. I believe he still has a claim for a considerable amount of money which has never been allowed or paid. General Terry took a military expedition into the country, and established and left garrisons at posts called Forts Pembina, Ranson, Totten, Stevenson, Buford, and then over into Montana. These posts did not all lie along the direct trail, but were calculated to protect the adjacent country. There were other posts established later, at Jamestown and Bismarck, and at the eastern end of the chain was Fort Abercrombie on the Red River of the North. The country west of the Red River was entirely devoid of white settlement except for the military posts. It is almost inconceivable that this should have been the fact; but in those days there was no Fargo, no Jamestown; Bismarck was still in the future, and Alexander McKenzie was bending his genius in some other direction than booming the future capital. It was not until the next year that the Northern Pacific crossed the Red River, taking the white man along in its wake — it was not safe to venture too far in front or to either side. In the summer of 1872 Jamestown was a roaring camp, and that fall the road went out to the Missouri. At that day so terrifying was the winter to the people who had not become inured to it, that no attempt was made to operate the railroad west of the Red River except in the summer-time.

And this was the country I was compelled to travel through to reach the military post at Fort Totten, beside which the Devils Lake agency was to be established. The military — the fort was garrisoned by three companies of the Twentieth Infantry — was occupying a new set of buildings; the old post was abandoned for agency use and occupied forthwith. It had been built in rather primitive fashion, and with a view of impressing the Indians rather than of adding to the attractions of the landscape. Around the buildings, some of which were still occupied by the mechanics attached to the post and for stabling purposes, was built a substantial log-stockade. The new post, partly erected the year before and completed after my arrival, was of brick and very presentable.

Here I was welcomed in such fashion as might be expected by Indians who did not know what might be looked for from the new institution. They were not exactly cordial. They were blanket Indians — essentially I mean, and in their mental attitude. Along the lake there were a number of half-breeds from the Red River, who had lingered after the buffalo had left the country. They gathered about and gave us a vivacious welcome, with "bonjours" in plenty, as well as offers of assistance — which were declined firmly but kindly.

Tio Waste (Pretty Lodge), who was also known as Little Fish, of the Sissetons, Wanata of the Cut Heads, and Left Bear of the Wahpetons, all prominent men, put themselves on the reception committee and came in to get acquainted. The rest of the seven hundred Indians, scattered about the reservation, apparently inspired by the reverse notion of the society woman's idea of etiquette, waited for me to go out and leave cards at their residences — which attitude they overcame when the fall set in and they became hungry and cold — the ordinary condition of the plains Indian at that day.

AN UNTAMED INDIAN

CHAPTER II

ON THE THRESHOLD OF CIVILIZATION

The Indian looking in at the "Open Door" — The Disposition and Attitude of the Sioux — "Bad Men" on the Border — The Rise to Favor of Sitting Bull — The Origin of the Sioux Bands and their Names.

In that day thirty thousand Sioux roamed the plains and valleys of the great Northwest. Those of the tribe residing on the east side of the Missouri River, having been more in contact with the whites and having had their fiercer propensities curbed by starvation, — incident to the disappearance of the big game, — were no longer to be compared with their warlike cousins of the Teton Sioux. They were visited by and visited with the Tetons to some extent, and those constant goings and comings had a demoralizing effect on them, while the Tetons still had game in their country to rely upon and were indifferent to the blandishments of the white man who had annuity goods to distribute. There were no rations for the Devils Lake Indians, and they were held on the reservation because they were peacefully disposed rather than because they could get any immediate gain from being enrolled at the agency. Since the Minnesota Massacre these bands located in North Dakota had roamed between the Minnesota settlements and the country of the renegades from Minnesota who had crossed the Canadian boundary-line in fear of the punishment that threatened them for their part in that ghastly affair. Another thing that held them was their affection for the soil. This is a distinguishing characteristic of the Indian — love of his native country. Had the Indians been the nomads they were regarded, there would have been very few Indian wars, for outbreaks were nearly always caused by attempts to dispossess the people of their ancestral hunting-grounds. The Medawakantons, Wahpakootas, Sissetons, and Wahpetons, comprising the somewhat undefined family of Santee Sioux, belonged in the country east of the Missouri, which might be broadly described as lying between that river and the Mississippi. The Yanktons and Yanktonai — of which latter band the Cut Heads were a sub or seceded band — held a middle place between these people and the Tetons. The Tetons looked with some contempt on the eastern bands, and the latter affected to believe that the Tetons were below them and wanting in the intellectual development that had come through friendly contact with the whites. The Tetons were undoubtedly the finer people physically, and more high-spirited and independent. But then the buffalo lasted longer in their country. The bands I have enumerated were all well within the white man's sphere of influence at that time, and were waiting with the Indian patience to be subjected to the civilizing process — though they would have resented being told so. As a whole they were harmless, but individuals were in the habit of wandering off to the west occasionally, or going to the north and indulging in such exchange of courtesies as horse-lifting.

In the trans-Missouri country it was altogether different. The Tetons were presumed, under the treaty to which their chiefs, or some of them, had subscribed in 1868, to have a local habitation along the Missouri River. Their place was in the Great Sioux reservation, a magnificent domain extending from the Nebraska line to the forty-sixth parallel of latitude and from the Missouri River west to the one hundred and fourth degree of longitude. The extent of the reservation would appear to a white man to have been sufficient to hold the Teton Sioux. But it did not. They wanted elbow-room and they took it by roaming over the entire country north of the North Platte, up to the international boundary, and west to the Big Horn Mountains. They hunted the buffalo, made war on the Rees, the Mandans, the Gros Ventres, and Crows, when they wanted horses or were spoiling to fight: they affiliated with the Northern Cheyennes and Arapahoes. They held the borderland down to where the Kiowas and Comanches came in contact with them, and the latter roamed the country to the point of contact with the Utes and Apaches, and held the border in a state of terror or anticipation of trouble, according to the mood of the Indians.

At that time the border towns on all the western frontier except Minnesota and Dakota — where the peaceful east-Missouri Sioux stood between the settlements and the warlike and predatory tribes — had a considerable leaven of "bad men." Professional Indian fighters who, on occasion, would turn their hands and ready guns to almost anything, from gambling to freighting through the Indian country and killing buffalo for hire, infested the smaller places. They constituted an element born of the times, and they passed with the day of the warlike Indian through the institution and enforcement of law. But they added color to a time that was lurid enough; they kept the Indians irritated by the cheapness in which they held an Indian's life and his family, and, while many of them yielded great service in strenuous times, when the hatchet was dug up and the Indians were on the war-path, they were by no means the romantic individuals the writers have made them. They headed the adventures into the Indian country, and they were generally responsible for much of the deviltry of the Indians. A dead tough was a dead white man — if he had died at the hands of the Indians he was ennobled and made a martyr by his death and the means of it, and furnished as good an excuse for attacking the Indians and driving them back as though his demise involved a real loss to society.

Another distinct class of men living in those days at the outposts of civilization were the hunters and trappers and guides who dwelt in the Indian country, who were essentially men of peace, but possessed a large measure of personal courage. They were the real pioneers, for they attained to a knowledge of the Indian, and, accommodating themselves to the Indian method of life, taught the red people to anticipate the coming of the white man. Men of this class frequently attached themselves to the agency staffs, and, knowing the language of the Indians, were extremely valuable to the officials, who too often were appointed from stations in civil life which had left them totally without knowledge of the people whom they were sent to control. The Indian of to-day himself stands much closer to civilized methods of life, has more knowledge of the conveniences and comforts of existence, than did these men who lived on the border a generation ago. In western Dakota, along the Missouri River there were many exemplars of this class. They helped to open the country, they guided or guarded the early navigation of that stream, and the West of to-day lies under an obligation to them that would be discharged in any other than a republican country. It was a far cry from "Wild Bill" Hickok, who was killed in Deadwood in the early days, to "Charlie" Reynolds, Custer's scout, who died on the Little Big Horn; but the men of whom they were types were numerous enough on the border in the early seventies, and each one of them contributed after his fashion to clearing the way for the farmer and stockman who now occupies the country.

About 1870 and 1871 a large proportion of the Teton Sioux were "out." The treaty of 1868, that had been signed by Red Cloud, of the Oglalas, and some other of the chiefs, was by no means to the liking of all of the Sioux. The signing of it had cost Red Cloud the loss of much of the influence he had wielded over the Sioux of his own and other bands. He had been the ideal chief, warlike and of abounding spirit, and lacking altogether in the qualities of mind that made Spotted Tail a diplomat and agency Indian. Spotted Tail, who had been a warrior of renown in his youth, came to understand that nothing was to be gained in a substantial way from fighting the whites. Red Cloud was inclined to fight or make peace as existing conditions indicated, but he became one of the signatories to the treaty of 1868 without reckoning with his host, the young man. He had made several appointments with the members of the commission seeking to make the treaty, but he had broken the engagements with contemptuous indifference, and when he did meet them at Laramie he insisted on having inserted in the treaty a provision permitting the Sioux to hunt in the ceded Indian lands outside of the Great Sioux Reservation. The treaty was an excellent one in many respects, and the Sioux came, in later years, to set great store by some of its provisions; but Red Cloud was rejected by the uncontrollable element among the young fighting men of his people, who blamed him for signing any treaty. It was this condition that gave Sitting Bull his opportunity. He professed to be, and was, a thorough hater of the whites. His medicine was Indian medicine, what the young man wanted, and he got a following altogether out of proportion to his merits as a leader, because he was essentially an unreconstructed Indian — which he remained to the day of his death.

So it was that, in the early seventies, a great number of the Sioux paid no attention to the fact that reservations had been appointed for them and that there were agents and agencies waiting for them. Their country was rich in buffalo; they were full-blooded and well fed, — when they condescended to visit the agencies and take rations, they frequently took flour in sacks, emptied the flour out on the prairie, and used the sacking to make clothing. They were opposed to the establishment of post and stage routes through their country, and there was a distinct prospect that they would interpose a strenuous objection to the building of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Indeed Major General W. S. Hancock, then commanding the Department of Dakota, with headquarters at St. Paul, Minnesota, wrote in 1871 an official document in which he said that interference by the Sioux and the Montana Indians with the construction of the road might be expected, and that he was unable to put, at the time, troops enough into the country to hold the Indians in check. The event proved that his fears were not altogether well founded. The Indians might have felt that they were not strong enough to interfere with the work, many of the people having gone into the agencies for the winter and remained there. But there were many depredations and much bloodshed. The Indians sometimes had the best of the encounter with the whites, but more frequently the worst of it, and they were taught many bitter lessons.

The country was unsafe generally, to the west of the agencies as far as the Montana settlements — where the Indian had early found that there was nothing to be gained in the way of glory or pelf. In those days there was not a ranchman between the Missouri River and the Rockies, and practically no settlement west of the Minnesota line, except in the southeastern part of the territory of Dakota; and it was not until the power of the Sioux was crushed utterly and the leaders were converted into agency Indians that the white man on the prairie could reckon on having a neighbor within a day's travel.

This condition to the west kept us unsettled at Fort Totten and the Devils Lake agency. The Cut Heads came and went between the reservation and the agencies on the Missouri River. They formed a connecting link between the two peoples. Sometimes they came in great numbers, and the agency stores suffered in proportion. There was no provision for the issuance of gratuitous rations or goods to the Indians of Devils Lake agency. Under the treaty they could get nothing except in payment for labor, — a wise arrangement which did much more than anything else in the way of policy ever formulated by the white man in the matter of civilizing the Indian and making him self-dependent. The old, infirm, and indigent we had to take care of. But the visitor was on a different list from that in which the agency Indian was enrolled. The agent was bound by custom to ration visitors from other reservations. If the visitors happened to be Cut Heads they were enrolled and assigned to the reservation. Sometimes they stayed; more frequently they remained through the winter, only to disappear to the west again when spring opened and there was a prospect of work at home in planting time. They must go and see their relatives. In the month of July, 1872, the enrolled population of the reservation fell off from 902 to 719. Sometimes they went off on excursions that involved reprisals against Indians from the north and west who had sneaked down and carried off their ponies. These expeditions were generally bloodless, but they kept things in a ferment.

Some of them who had been far to the west, engaged in warfare, came in and settled down. There was the case of Standing Buffalo's people; Standing Buffalo had been a man of importance among the Sisseton Sioux. At the time of the Minnesota Massacre he had withdrawn himself and his following from the Sissetons. He was a friend of the whites and did not want to be where he could be accused of any complicity in the outbreak. He went far to the west, into the Woody Mountain country, eventually, close to the hunting-grounds of the Crows, the hereditary enemies of all Sioux. He probably affiliated with the Assiniboines, who are of the Sioux family, and had a part in their wars with the Crows. He was killed in a battle in 1869, and his people, headed by Shipto, himself a man of standing, made their way back, down through the country of the Gros Ventres, the Arickarees, and the Mandans, and on, in a leisurely way, to the Devils Lake reservation, where they settled among their brethren. Shipto's influence was cast for the white man, and he laid aside his warlike tools and went to work. But for a long time he would hide his axe when anybody approached the place where he was working, feeling that it was degrading that a warrior should be seen engaged in manual labor.

The ties of blood are, with the Indian, very binding, and the ease with which various bands affiliated without losing their identity was, and is still, one of the peculiar features of these remarkable people.

The Sioux were a great nation in remote times — as time is reckoned since history came to be written in this country. They were of the great Siouan or Dakota race, and it may have been that the nation was formed of the scattered people, who, having a common language, were allied for sociability or purposes of defense. They did not require this alliance because of their warfare with the whites, for during many years it was the boast of the Sioux, who was continually engaged in war with the tribes on all sides of him, that he had never shed the blood of a white man. Their division into bands and the naming of those bands have always been a matter of speculation for bookish men who have studied the Indian. The general absence of traditional history among the Sioux prevents the acquisition of information as to how or when the bands were organized, but the names given them indicate, generally, a peculiarity or attribute that accounts for the descriptive title they took or had bestowed upon them. The simplicity of thought of a simple people is shown in the meaning of these names. The habit of the Sioux, in this, will illustrate the general practice of all Indian tribes.

The Cut Heads, whose name is literally translated, get their title from the fact that when they withdrew from the Yanktonai, there was a row over their secession and a fight. Their leader sustained a scalp wound and the name Cut Head was given them at once and accepted without protest or question.

The Hunkpapas get their name from their hereditary right of pitching their tepees at the outer edge of the encampment commanding the entrance to the village, as defenders of the camp, the word "Hunkpapa" meaning the border or outer edge.

The Oglalas' designation is not easily rendered. Among the Sioux, contempt and defiance for an individual are expressed by extending the hand at arm's length and flicking the fingers toward the person to whom the opprobrium is directed. The motion has been accepted as a deadly insult. It might be regarded as a sign for expressing contempt by throwing dirt in the face of another. When the Oglalas, a family allied closely by blood to the Brule Sioux, fell under the leadership of a man ambitious to found a house of his own, who withdrew from the larger body, it is said that, in leaving the others, they expressed their contempt by making this sign and were immediately dubbed the "Dirt-Throwers."

The Minniconjous acquired their name from their practice of planting close to a stream, Mini-akiya-oju, meaning "Planting-near-the-water."

The Two-Kettle band suffers in its title by the English translation, the Sioux designation meaning "Two Cookings." The man who established the family as a separate band made his boast that his people were not poor, that the hunter always provided enough food for two meals, or cookings, one pot being altogether insufficient to contain the meat his prowess as a hunter brought to the mess.

Wahpeton means "Village in the Leaves," indicating a family characteristic, which led the people to live amidst the trees. The Wahpakootas are, literally, "Leaf-shooters," the title coming from some custom that has been lost sight of.

The Sans Arcs (without a bow) spring from a family or clan that, through improvidence or choice, failed to provide themselves with bows on the occasion of some expedition. The family from which the Blackfeet band of Sioux takes its title appeared one evening in the general camp, after an unsuccessful expedition, with their moccasins worn out and feet blackened from having passed through a burned prairie. The Loafers, a sub-band of the Brules, were obviously named from their laggard and unthrifty characteristics. Equally simple and significant of unimportant events are the names of other bands, the titles being bestowed by outsiders needing a description, and being frequently based on some ridiculous or trifling incident. The proper name of the Sioux nation, Dakota or Lakota, bespeaks, however, a fitting appreciation of the importance of the tribe, the word "Dakodia" or "Lakodia" meaning kinsmen allied by a common language.

CHAPTER III

LIFE WITH THE AGENCY INDIANS

Terrific Winters in the Early Days — An Entire Company of Soldiers frozen to Death crossing the Plains — Dealing with the Indians without the Aid of Free Rations — Removal to Standing Rock Agency.

IN the dull round of life at the Devils Lake agency during my first five years among the Sioux, nothing stands out so much as the frightful stress of the winter months, when, isolated from the world, we were weather-bound for five or six months of the year. There is no sort of doubt in my mind that the climate in the far North was more severe in those days than it is now. We divided the year into two seasons, winter and summer. There were about seven months of the former, and five of the latter. It was no joke that the old-timer in the territory of Dakota indulged in when he said that his climate was made up of seven months winter and five months bad weather. During the winter, there was nothing to be done but to house up and keep as comfortable as possible. The mails were received at intervals marked by the weatherly conditions. The Indians did not interfere with the mail-carriers on the route that lay between us and the settlements; but the stations were far apart and many a poor wretch met his death in crossing the prairie. A few years prior to my taking up a residence in the country, a detachment of soldiers making a winter march was overtaken by a blizzard and the entire command frozen to death. This occurred in the neighborhood of Lake Traverse. Every winter some of our Indians were badly frozen on or near the reservation, but seldom fatally. The soldiers who were posted at the stations on the mail-route often suffered severely. Of these, there were two at each mail station, whose business it was to exercise a sort of patrol and maintain the stations as places of refuge for wayfarers. The trails were little traveled in the winter months, and the soldiers led a life beside which that of the sheep-herders who live in the solitude of the great plains to-day is a round of gayety.

Under the articles of the treaty of 1867, which provided for the establishment of the agency at Fort Totten, no rations could be issued to the people except in cases of extreme destitution. Their life was a frightfully hard one, but the method of treating the people was undoubtedly right. They were provided with work, cutting logs and wood for fuel and fencing, and paid in subsistence and clothing for what they did. Compelled as they were to habits of industry, in order that they might obtain the means of living, they soon forgot that it was beneath the dignity of a warrior to work. If they had been entitled to rations or money payments, they most assuredly would not have kept up the agency wood-supply, as they did. The old people and the indigent were supplied with the necessaries of life, but the others got only what they worked for.

It was in 1875 that the death of Major Forbes occurred. His death was preceded by a long illness, which had left me in virtual charge of the agency at Devils Lake, and in May, 1876, I was appointed to fill the vacancy. There were many applicants for the place, and an appointment was even made and then withdrawn because of opposition, and my appointment followed. In 1880, I was offered the agency at Standing Rock. The place was an important one from the fact that many of the Indians had been out as hostiles, and they required treatment by a man who knew the Sioux. Father Stephen, who was later director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, with headquarters at Washington, was then the agent at Standing Rock. At the time there was a condition that required explanation, and I waited for the matter to be arranged. Some one had been guilty of tampering with the scales used in the weighing of the beef cattle delivered for the Indians, which had to be investigated and responsibility therefor determined. Consequently, it was the fall of the following year before I moved to Standing Rock.

The sun-dance was the most baneful of the old-time practices of the Sioux people. It was not, as is generally supposed, a function to test the personal courage of the candidates for place among the warriors. That was merely an incident of the ceremony. It was held for the purpose of propitiating by personal sacrifice the Great Spirit, and placating the pernicious spirits of the earth. It was an oblation purely, the persons taking part desiring to show that they were willing to submit to personal suffering in the hope that the community would be blessed in the harvest, or in any undertaking in which they were about to engage. The sun-dance pole, which was usually about twelve inches in diameter at the base and twenty feet in length, was selected with much ceremony. After being carefully prepared, the larger end was set in the ground a sufficient depth to give it firmness. Throughout the preliminaries the medicine men fasted and prayed, and during the dance the ears of children were pierced. While the ceremony was in progress, and the candidates were suspended by lariats run through the muscles of their breasts or back, from a cross-bar situated near the top of the pole, the prayers and dancing went on without interruption, the selected singers chanting in weird and mournful strains. The men fastened to the pole made good their self-immolation by staring continually at the sun, in consequence of which their eyes invariably became terribly inflamed. Some of the lookers-on would plead with the candidates that they be cut down, to which they would not consent. On the contrary, they whistled continuously to show that they were not affected by their sufferings. Other candidates for the sacrifice had buffalo-heads attached to their bodies by lariats with skewers through their back muscles, and ran around jumping and dancing until the weight of the drag broke the flesh away. Among the Sioux, the sun-dance invariably continued three consecutive days, the test of courage and endurance being reserved for the last day. The lacerated wounds received no attention in the way of dressing or being cared for until the dance ended at sundown on the third day. At one of such dances, which I attended in 1872, a young man had raw-hide thongs run through the muscles of his back, the thongs being attached to a cross near the top of the sun-dance pole, and another young man was fastened to the pole by thongs through the muscles of his breast. Both remained with their feet barely touching the ground, swaying back and forth for an hour or more before released by the sorely tried flesh giving way.

Before leaving Devils Lake, I put a stop to a sundance, and believe that it has never been practiced there since. Learning that there was such a ceremony in progress at Wood Lake, about ten miles east of Fort Totten, I took with me J. E. Kennedy, agency clerk, and Tawacihomini, an Indian policeman, and went to the scene of the dance. The Indians were in the midst of this barbarous ceremony when we broke through their ring and stopped the affair. It was good evidence of their subjection that they stopped without protest when ordered to desist, an outcome that would not have been possible a few years previous, when such an attempt would doubtless have resulted seriously to the sacrilegious interloper.

When I arrived at Standing Rock in September, 1881, things were very different from the situation that had existed at Devils Lake. The hostiles, starved into submission and recently surrendered, were by no means tractable. Their attitude was that of sullen resentment. Hunger had driven them to the agency, and they were living on the reservation; but they were still sore at heart, and not in a mood to accept the leadership of the white man. Two things I conceived to be necessary to their betterment and ultimate civilization. I was convinced that they should be led to become farmers if the reservation was adapted to agriculture; that stock-raising would permit too much roaming and confirm them in their nomadic habits. The other essential feature to the civilization of the Sioux was the schooling of the children under conditions that would lead them into the habits of the whites. I was measurably successful in showing them that industrious tillage of the soil would lead to prosperity, and successful, beyond my hopes, in bringing the children into school. The ties of affection that bind the Indian child to the parent were the greatest bar to the educational work, and I have told elsewhere how, in the case of Crow King, that bond was used to lead them to school.

I worked with the head men, and the others followed so well that last summer, when I was on the Standing Rock reservation, I found the greater part of the children in school. But the beginning was hard, up-hill work. The hostiles were outspoken in their resentment of white domination. I sometimes had to use drastic measures to make them reasonable or to establish my influence. One old fellow, named Long Soldier, about six feet, four inches in height, had been loitering about the agency warehouse for several days, and one day I asked him what his object was, and he replied, that he was watching to see that nobody stole any of the supplies that were placed there for the Indians. I informed him that his sentinelship in that respect was unnecessary, as I would see to that. He declared with a showing of ferocity, that the white men were all thieves and enemies of the Indians; and he menaced me with a knife. He was a man of some standing among the hostiles, and it occurred to me at once that the time had come to impress him. I threw open my coat, and invited him to use his knife on me. I charged him with being a coward when he hesitated. Other Indians gathered around, and I insisted that he had not the courage to kill the white man who he knew was his friend, but whom he treated as an enemy because of his bad heart. Another Indian, named Kill Eagle, came up, and took the knife away from him, rebuking him for his cowardice, and ordered him to leave for home at once, which he did. That same fellow came to me a few days later, and said he wanted me to be his friend; that he regarded me as just and courageous, and that he was convinced that the way of the white man was the right way. Such strenuous appeal as this was not often necessary in dealing with the people, but the argument offered them had to be such as would appeal to their intelligence, undeveloped as it was.

The years from 1881 to 1890 made the formative period of the minds of the Standing Rock Sioux, for the era of peace and education that set in so strongly after the ghost-dancing had culminated in the death of Sitting Bull. It took several of these years for me to win the complete confidence of the hostiles. They were surly and suspicious, but when they were thoroughly won over, they made great and immediate progress. I made Gall and Crow King my friends, and they were important factors in leading the others to civilization. To the influence of these two men and John Grass, with others not so well known to the whites, but who were powerful among their people, might be ascribed the progress of the Indians under my charge. They were made to understand that the gradual withdrawal of Government assistance was not due to the indifference of the Government to their wants, but a means of making them self-dependent. A good many of the older Indians declined to accept the white man's burden of labor, but the able-bodied amongst them soon came to understand that, while work might be degrading, according to the notion of a warrior, it was essential if the warrior did not want to starve to death. Sitting Bull always exerted a vicious influence over this unreconstructed element, and remained opposed to the white man's influence to the last.

Grass, Gall, Crow King, and some of the others, especially the agency judges and police, fought Sitting Bull's influence at all times, and when he became menacingly obstreperous during the period just before his death, Gall asked to be armed. If he had been given the guns he asked for, the death of Sitting Bull might have been precipitated — also an internecine war might have resulted.

There was one occasion when Sitting Bull appeared to have accepted the conditions of peace, but it was apparent afterwards that his attitude at the time of the dedication and unveiling of Standing Rock was inspired by a desire to take part in an affair that was essentially Indian, and had to do with the medicine of his people.

The Standing Rock, from which the agency at Fort Yates took its name, was a remarkable petrifaction or stone formation in the shape of a woman with a child on her back. The figure was very life-like, and the Indians had no doubt that it was a petrifaction. I am inclined to believe that it was, myself, though it is not life-size. The resemblance between the stone and any one of a dozen Indian women with children on their backs who may be seen about its site any day, is striking enough to startle one. So many years ago that the story of its discovery is lost in the maze of antiquity, the Sioux found the figure and ascribed to it a place in their spiritual beliefs. It was venerated as a sacred relic, but I never understood that any peculiar powers were attributed to it. It stood as a sort of fetich and was regarded with much reverence. It was the common property of the Teton Sioux, but it lay for years in the section occupied by the Lower Yanktonai, and that band was the protector of the rock. While the agency took its name from the rock, the petrifaction was located some five miles above the agency. I proposed to the head men that it be brought down to the agency, and set up on a pedestal placed on a height overlooking the Missouri, which height was known as Proposal Hill, owing to the fact that much of the courting indulged in by the young people of the Garrison occurred while strolling over its slopes. They acquiesced in this suggestion at once, and elaborate preparations were made for the setting up of the stone.

A great council was held, and it was decided by the medicine men that the duty of dedicating and unveiling the stone could only be performed by some man possessing all the Indian virtues, and whose life was stainless. It was not an easy matter to pick out a man having these qualities, and there was much discussion. While the matter was being decided, the rock was brought down to the agency and a pedestal erected.

Along with this rock, there was another that was also good medicine, it being the petrifaction of a little dog, which Indian belief declared belonged to the woman and must be kept with her.

There was a great deal of building going on about the agency at that time; and after the rocks were brought down, the smaller one, becoming mixed with the "nigger-heads" used for the building of a foundation wall, was built into a wall and lost. The little dog is not far removed from the figure of the woman at whose feet it lay for years, but it is part of the wall upon which one of the agency residences is built, a few rods back of the site of the standing rock.

There was so much palavering and discussion as to the merits of various virtuous Indians, that the rock was ready for the dedication before a selection had been made. Eventually, it was decided that Fire Cloud, a member of Fire Heart's band of Blackfeet, possessed all the needful virtues, and he was designated to perform the ceremony of dedication.

Fire Cloud had been a hostile, and his peculiar virtues were intensely Indian, and therefore not of a character to appeal to the whites. He was known as a clean man and a most powerful worker on the spirit in the matter of making prayers. I have heard nowhere more powerful or eloquent pleading than Fire Cloud was capable of when the spirit moved him. He undertook to make the stone ready for the dedication, and he indulged in much preparation himself. His heart and body had to be made clean for the work, and this required much medicine-making. The day before the date set for the unveiling of the stone, Fire Cloud spent in painting with much elaboration the figure of a woman. He used many colors, and each stripe applied meant something sacred in the symbolism of the medicine men of the Sioux. These symbolical figures were held secret by the medicine men, the common people not knowing anything about them, and some of them were undoubtedly invented under the inspiration of the work engaged in. The night before the ceremony, the painting was completed, except a few stripes that must be applied after all was done, and the figure, standing on a rock pedestal, was wrapped about in an ordinary blanket, and all was ready. The next day, the people gathered for the ceremony. Sitting Bull was there, his spirit apparently tamed, and he a peace advocate for the first time in his life.

I talked to the people; told them how fitting it was that the rock should be preserved and placed so that it might be seen for miles up and down the Missouri, to the end that travelers might know that the Sioux lived, and were protected, on the lands that had been their fathers'. Even the hostiles appeared to be gratified. Then Fire Cloud stood by the rock, and pronounced an invocation that was profoundly moving, coming as it did from an Indian who had hitherto shown no disposition to be at one with the whites. Addressing the Great Spirit, he prayed for peace, hoping that the erection of the monument would establish a lasting peace in all the land, between the Indians and the whites, and among the Indians as well. He would have the Great Spirit bless the rock, and the place, that it might be regarded as a pledge of eternal cessation from warfare. Sitting Bull and his people gave guttural assent in many "Hows" which sounded like Amens. Fire Cloud prayed that the Great Spirit would bless his red children and prosper their crops, withholding the hail that had desolated their fields the previous year. He turned to the Indians and charged them that it was their duty to observe the laws of the Great Spirit, and those among them who had not clean hearts and hands should stand abashed and humiliated in the presence of the woman of the Standing Rock and the Great Spirit; he called on them to repent and devote themselves to leading clean and pure lives in the future. The appeal and the prayer were exceedingly impressive, and must have lasted an hour. At its conclusion, I performed the ceremony of unveiling by removing the blanket, and Fire Cloud added a few more painted symbols.

To this day, Standing Rock remains fixed on the brow of the hill overlooking the Missouri, but it is not as impressive in its aspect as it was originally. On one occasion, when I was absent from the agency for some days, the employees concluded to surprise me by pulling down the rock pedestal upon which the Standing Rock was placed, and to show how the Indians had progressed in the arts of civilization, they built for it a modern and less attractive structure of brick and mortar. But it stands there in all its essentiality as it was; and the spirit of peace invoked by Fire Cloud has settled down to abide over the land of the Teton Sioux to the west of the Missouri.

CHAPTER IV

BRAVE BEAR AND THE ONLY ONE

Notable Indian Crimes — The Slaying of the DeLormes — Ghastly Forms of Indian Mourning — How One Elk held his Father-in-Law.

When Brave Bear was hanged for his crime, his father, an old Indian of the Cut Head band of Sioux, came and sought me out at the agency.

"Is my son dead?" asked the father.

I was nonplussed, for it was not given me to carry on without feeling a conversation with a father about a son who was hanged the day before. But I had to make the best of it. The old man was very earnest and not at all angry — though he might have charged me with trying to rid the world of Brave Bear long before he was finally overtaken by the fate that was appointed him from the beginning.

"He is dead," I answered.

"Are you sure he is dead?" persisted the old man.

"I have a telegram saying that he was hanged yesterday," said I.

"It is well," rejoined the old man. "We are glad, his mother and myself, for he was a bad son."

And this frightful declaration was as near eulogium as was ever pronounced on Brave Bear, a murderer and habitual criminal — which few of his tribe have been. They have been guilty of deeds of blood, but none of them were sneaking murderers for a little gain, as Brave Bear was. Even The Only One — whose distinctive appellation might have pointed him out as a notable exception to the common run of his people, and whose hands were imbrued in blood spilled for gain — was a very decent sort compared to his companion in crime, Brave Bear. And he escaped the ignominy of the death that was the portion of Brave Bear, dying in a desperate attempt to escape after the most sensational sort of capture, and being mourned in the most heart-breaking and barbarous way by his wife, one of the handsomest women of the Sioux nation — a people not wanting in women with physical attractions.

Brave Bear was a sort of Indian dude. The Only One was quite the contrary — by no means the distinguished individual that the hopes or fancy of his parents painted when they gave him a name that indicated how high a place he had in their esteem. Brave Bear always had plenty of clothes, cheap jewelry, all the things that go to make the dandy at an Indian agency — or did go to make such a personage in the days when civilized garb was not so common as it is now. How he maintained his well-dressed habit I don't know, but suppose from his finish that it was not by honest means. These men were not much given to living close to the reservations, but roamed about the settlements a great deal. They might have lived by thievery.

In any event they attained distinction in the field of high crime, when they found it to their purpose to commit a frightful butchery while engaged in robbing a settler named DeLorme, near Pembina, North Dakota, in 1873. They had entered a stable for the purpose of stealing horses, and when two of the owners arrived on the scene, they shot and killed both, and a third man was mortally wounded. In the house were two women, and the Indians attacked them, shooting and wounding both of them. One of the women put up her hands to defend herself from a blow aimed at her head by Brave Bear, who carried a sword, and who struck her with it. The blow cut off one of her fingers, laid open her scalp, and stretched her apparently dead; but she recovered, as did the other woman. Brave Bear and The Only One rifled the place, stole several horses, and escaped to the Missouri River country, passing through Devils Lake reservation, where I then was. As soon as I learned of the tragedy, I was convinced that Brave Bear and The Only One were of the party who had perpetrated the crime. They kept away from Devils Lake agency; but, having learned the facts of the murder from trustworthy Indians, I reported them to the proper authorities.

I heard nothing of them for several years; but one day in the winter of 1878 word was brought to me that they had arrived at Devils Lake and were living among the Cut Head Sioux at the west end of the reservation. Everything pointed to them as the authors of the butchery at Pembina. It was common knowledge among the Indians that they had committed the crime, but the people were afraid to interfere with them. They were bad men, whose presence among the Indians and impudent indifference to the authorities were demoralizing. Having convinced myself by inquiry that there was no doubt of their guilt, I made arrangements to capture them in the early spring, before their ponies were in condition for them to start out on their usual summer raids.

The capture, to be made without bloodshed, must be effected by surprise, and it must not fail, for with the Indian, even more than with the white man, nothing succeeds like success. It would be useless to attempt to take the men in their camp. They would assuredly fight, and that was not necessary. But they were very shy of coming to the agency. The only thing to do was to call a council of their band. They could not absent themselves from this without making themselves too conspicuous for safety, and once in the agency council-room we might handle them.

At the time two troops of the Seventh Cavalry, Custer's old command, was in garrison at Fort Totten. I conferred with Captain James M. Bell, now Brigadier General Bell, retired, who commanded the post, and arranged with him for the necessary troops when needed.

Planting time was approaching, and I sent out a call for a council, to which all adult male members of the Cut Head band were invited, and required to attend; the ostensible object of the council being to ascertain the acreage of land each family intended to cultivate that year, so as to determine the quantity of seed needed. The council was to be held in the assembly hall, which was on the second floor of the main building of the agency group. In the rear was my office. The door to this was to be guarded by employees of the agency, with one of the more muscular at each of the two front windows, Thomas J. Reedy guarding one window and Frank Cavanaugh the other. It was arranged to have an armed squad of dismounted soldiers paraded behind the garrison buildings, where they could not be seen from the agency, so that when Brave Bear and The Only One had entered the council-room the detail would, upon a prearranged signal, double-quick to the agency, file up the stairs, and secure the two Indians.

The plan worked, after a great deal of waiting and more than an even chance of failure. Every other Cut Head Sioux then on the reservation was seated in the room before Brave Bear and The Only One put in an appearance. They seemed to feel that they were taking some sort of chance, and only the fact that their absence would make them conspicuous brought them in finally. Brave Bear came in first and was not disturbed. Then came The Only One, who cautiously ascended the stairway; and as soon as he had entered the hall James Stitsell, agency harness-maker, who was stationed outside for the purpose, signaled the garrison, and Lieutenant Herbert J. Slocum, U. S. A., now a major of cavalry, coming from the post with a detail of eight men, in double-quick time, closed in on the landing, filed up the stairway rapidly, and before the soldiers had reached the head of the stairs leading into the room, The Only One knew that he was trapped. He bounded through the council-room and made for a door leading into the office, which was in the north end, with the evident intention of escaping through a window; but his way was barred there by John E. Kennedy, agency clerk, and George H. Faribault, agency farmer, whereupon he rushed back toward where I was standing, near the front door, and being pointed out to Lieutenant Slocum, was soon in the hands of the soldiers.

The other Indians were tremendously excited, but I soon quieted them by announcing that no others were to be molested, and most of them knew that Brave Bear and The Only One were guilty of murder. There was no interference by the assembled Indians, and the men were taken downstairs, The Only One going first between a couple of soldiers, and Brave Bear following. They passed out of the hall and down the stairway, which was on the outside of the south front of the building, and the foot of which was only a few feet from the southeast corner. Neither of the prisoners was bound, as it was not thought that any attempt at escape would be made. As they reached the corner of the building, The Only One made up his mind to take a desperate chance. It was only about twenty-five yards to the rear of the building. Once around the corner he could afford to take a chance on being shot down, and there was the open country — which he had occupied in defiance of arrest for so long — before him. To refuse the chance meant incarceration, and almost certain death. The Only One did not stop long to think about the chances. He took them. With one bound he was out from between the files of soldiers. A few more bounds took him around the corner of the building, and he was off for the open country. The soldiers of his guard were astonished for a moment, then took after the fugitive, who had slipped out of his blanket and was running free. In the meantime Brave Bear was closed in on. The officer in charge, Lieutenant Slocum, drew his pistol and stepped up beside the man. The rest of the guard was ordered to the pursuit of the runaway. Slocum was not taking any chances on Brave Bear, but he wanted to be in with the chase.

"Here, Jack," he cried to J. E. Kennedy, agency clerk, "you take my pistol and hold this fellow, will you? while I go with my men."

"Not me," said Kennedy; "I have n't lost any Indians."

And Slocum had to hold his own prisoner. He landed him in the guardhouse.

The Only One was then far on the road to freedom. He was giving an exhibition of sprinting that has not been seen on that prairie since. Anticipating that the soldiers would not hesitate to shoot at him, he ran, bounding high and jumping sideways every jump. Once off the agency grounds, he had a very good chance of getting away. There were sloughs to the west that would hide a pursued man, and beyond there was open ground that would subsist an Indian, especially if he had no moral scruples about other people's property; and there was comparative safety at the western agencies. The hostiles were still out in the Northwest, and Sitting Bull was not the man to ask a fugitive who came to him if he had blood on his hands, or to hold it against him if he knew that he had killed a white man or woman. He would be comparatively safe if he could even reach the camp of the Cut Heads at the west end of the Devils Lake reservation, for there were horses to be had there. And he was making a run for his life.

The soldiers were rather anxious to get the man and needed no urging to open fire on him — and very bad practice they made of it, though the mark presented by The Only One was not so easy to hit as a target might have been; and they expended a great quantity of ammunition uselessly until the sergeant, one of those grizzled non-coms who were common enough on the frontier at that time, and are very scarce now, more's the pity! took a hand in the game. He dropped on one knee, took careful aim, and fired. The Only One dropped with a ball in his thigh. The soldiers ran up toward him, thinking he was *hors de combat.* In a moment The Only One made up his mind that his time had come, and that he might better die fighting than on the scaffold. He stood up, and the men saw that he had his knife in his hand. With frightful screams, part of agony from his wound and part the prompting of his enraged spirits, he ran at the men, his shattered thigh causing him to run lame at every other step. He was intent on getting at the soldiers and forcing them to kill him. The old sergeant saw what the man intended, and he concluded that it was time to put him out of business, — that winging The Only One would do no good. Down he went on his knee again, and there was no wavering in his aim. His bullet found the heart of The Only One, and he dropped dead.

The Cut Heads were greatly excited still, and the relatives of The Only One particularly so. One young brave, a brother of Brave Bear, thinking that the entire family might be apprehended on general principles, made off to the northwest while The Only One was being pursued. Some mounted soldiers from the post, thinking he was wanted too, started after him. The Indian made good headway, but was pretty well exhausted, and might have been captured presently but that he ran into a slough. Burying himself in the mud and weeds, he eluded his pursuers until it was found that he was not the man wanted, and they were called off. But it was many a day before he could be induced to come into the agency.

This occurred on Saturday evening, and the following Monday, being ration-day, all of the Indians came in for their rations. With them came the wife and the mother of The Only One. I have, as I said, seen Indians give frightful expression to their mourning sentiments, but the grief shown by those two women was awful in its manifestations. The wife of The Only One was a magnificently proportioned and handsome woman. Her beauty was something to be talked of. When I was called out by the wailing of the women they presented a shocking sight. It was customary for the widow of a recently deceased Indian to disfigure herself, to demonstrate that her grief was boundless and that she had no regard for her appearance now that the husband was dead. They would nearly always cut off their hair without regard to uniformity as to length, and also usually scarify themselves.

The wife of The Only One did not stop at the ordinary manifestations of grief. She was a ghastly sight when I found her with her mother-in-law, the two crying out incoherent words of endearment and grief, relating the many good qualities of the dead man as a husband and son, for the taint of blood is not to the detriment of an Indian man's standing in his family, or was not in those days. The younger woman had torn nearly all the clothing from her body. She had cut off the hair from her entire head, and much of it she had torn out by the roots. Her breasts were hacked and gashed with a knife. She had cut great gashes in the lower part of each leg, from the knees to the ankles; she was streaming with blood and was an awful sight. The mother had gone almost as far in the expression of her woe, and had deliberately chopped off the little finger of her left hand, which among the Sioux at that time was a common expression of mourning for a relative killed. I don't think that grief could be made to wear a more horrid front than it did that day among the relatives of the dead murderer. This awful practice of maiming one's self as evidence of affection for the dead is one of the things that the Sioux have given up in a great measure under the restraining influences of civilization and Christianity; though the grief of the Indian is still clamorous, at least so far as the women are concerned. I have, on more than one occasion, found a family engaged in great lamentation, the women throwing ashes on their heads and wailing at the tops of their voices, and, upon inquiring, have been told that the mourning was for somebody who had been dead a year or two. Something had occurred, as a meeting of relatives who had been parted and who had not hitherto had opportunity to make common cause in mourning.

But to return to Brave Bear: he was not permitted to escape from the military guardhouse. This was rather to my astonishment, for I had not much faith in the capacity of the guardians of that noteworthy military institution to hold an Indian prisoner. I had taken chances on Brave Bear and The Only One remaining on the reservation during the winter, rather than commit them sooner to the custody of the soldiers with the moral certainty of their escape before spring. My experiences in the past had not inspired me with any great respect for the holding capacity of the post guardhouse. But it held Brave Bear fast enough until the civil authorities took charge of him. He was taken first to Bismarck and later to Fargo for trial, and the case against him was complete enough. When he was arraigned for trial, the two women who had survived the murderous attack on the DeLorme family fully identified him as one of the assailants. I was called as a witness, and it was expected that a speedy conviction would be had. But even in those days the Indian had come to an appreciation of the quibbles that make loopholes in the white man's law. The case had not proceeded beyond the first forenoon when the counsel appointed for the defense moved for the dismissal of the indictment on the ground that the court had no jurisdiction; that the crime alleged to have been committed was stated to have been committed in Pembina County, where there was a duly organized tribunal for the adjudication of offenses, criminal and civil. The point was sustained by the court, the indictment dismissed, and Brave Bear sent up to Pembina for trial. He was put in the jail at Pembina, and one morning he was missing. With him went the horse of the jailer. Brave Bear declared afterwards that his medicine was good and had liberated him; that he had simply invoked the power of his medicine and floated up through the roof of the jail. As to the disappearance of the jailer's horse, why, that might have been a part of the medicine.

With the speed with which the Indian can move when he is put to it, Brave Bear made his way down through the territory to the Pine Ridge reservation. I believe he found things too hot for him there, or he longed for the fleshpots of the Cut Heads, his people, on the Standing Rock reservation. In any event he left Pine Ridge agency with a stolen horse, and started north. Somewhere above Fort Sully he met and murdered a man named Johnson. He stripped the victim of this second crime and put on the dead man's clothing. In the pocket of the vest he found $1700 in money. With the dead man's rifle in his hand, he started across the country. Johnson was a prominent Odd Fellow, and the members of that order offered a big reward for the capture of the murderer. The crime was charged to Brave Bear. The latter eluded pursuit and made his way to the far Northwest and over into Canada, where he found asylum with Sitting Bull.

He remained with the old medicine man and appears to have been of some importance in the band — now greatly decimated in numbers. In the summer of 1881 Sitting Bull, to the dismay of Brave Bear, came in and surrendered and was sent to Standing Rock agency, and Brave Bear had no choice but to go with him. That fall I took charge at Standing Rock, and Brave Bear was on the reservation until the day before my arrival. He knew me and was not in the humor to take chances on what would happen when I located him. He had cached, or said he had, a considerable portion of the money he had robbed Johnson of, and he took a white man into his confidence so far as the hidden money was concerned, offering to divide the wealth if the white man would put him across the Missouri River. The deal was made, but Brave Bear had lingered too long. Other men on the reservation had identified him, and they also knew of the reward that had been offered for his capture. He was taken across the river by his white friend and soon after held up by a party of four men who were on the lookout for him, and Brave Bear was made a captive for the last time. He was sent to Yankton, then the capital of Dakota Territory, and tried for the murder of Johnson. There was no doubt of his guilt. He was condemned and hanged.

Going back to the insecurity of that prison at the post, so far as providing for the restraint of an Indian was concerned, I am reminded of the affair of One Elk, who killed his father-in-law, his mother-in-law, and his sister-in-law, in an access of zeal for the government, laying his relatives by marriage on the altar of good government with a singleness of purpose and disregard to his personal sentiments that remind one of the patriot who was willing that all his wife's relatives should enlist for the war. One Elk was incarcerated in the military guardhouse as a consequence of his crimes, and one night walked out of that stronghold, in defiance of all military ordinance, and, coming over to my quarters, informed me that he had no possible objection to confinement, but that he would not stay in the soldiers' jail: if I would provide him quarters in the agency guardhouse, he would willingly remain there.

It was in the spring of 1881 that One Elk made sacrifice of his wife's family in carrying out what he conceived to be the will of the government as represented by the agent. About that time I had great difficulty in handling the nomadic Indians. When the agency was established at Fort Totten, it was for the purpose of giving a reservation to the wandering people who were roaming the prairies of northern Dakota, of bringing them under the influence of the government and giving them a permanent habitation. It was my business to gather them in and enroll them as belonging to the agency, and to keep them there. But they conceived the idea that the agency was a ration station — at least a good many of them did. They would drop in, stop for a time, then disappear, only to appear at some other agency and go through the same performance. They would start out from Fort Peck or one of the southwestern reservations, swing around to Devils Lake, find some of their relatives there, conclude that was the only place to live, and so declare themselves. When they had rested and were through with their visiting, they would pack up and disappear.

Something had to be done to curb their habits in this direction. So it happened that in the spring of that year I called a council, and told the people that if they wanted to live on the reservation, to have houses and farms like the whites, they must remain where they were, and I would make some provision for getting them seeds and other necessaries. But they must on no account leave the reservation. This argument was necessary, particularly in the case of the Cut Heads. The Sisseton and Wahpeton were willing enough to remain, though they visited a good deal with their relatives on the Lake Traverse reservation a distance of about two hundred and fifty miles.

The Cut Heads, being a sub-band of the Yanktonai, had relatives at Fort Peck, Standing Rock, and Crow Creek, and in other parts of the Great Sioux reservation, and it was very difficult to hold them at an agency when they might roam almost without limit through a country that was still rich in game, and visit their people at great distances. Their band was recruited at Devils Lake from parties that had come in from other reservations to the west. Among these wanderers was the family of Two Bulls, the father-in-law of One Elk. The old man was inoffensive but confirmed in his nomadic habits. He did not propose to remain on the reservation, but intended to betake himself and his household to the west — he had come from Standing Rock the previous fall. He was present at the council when I announced that no more wandering about would be permitted, and that the Cut Heads must content themselves on the reservation. I indicated that any attempt to leave without permission would result in the people being brought back and punished in some sort. One Elk gave enthusiastic assent to the proposition that he was a Devils Lake Indian, and announced that he was ready to spend the rest of his days there.

I don't know if there was a family council, but there probably was. In any event old Two Bulls made up his mind that it was time for him to make his flitting. Unfortunately for him his son-in-law, One Elk, made up his mind that it was his duty to see to it that the old man did not get away. But the old fellow did. He moved by degrees, edging his camp along toward the west end of the reservation, and eventually making off through the broken country to the west. He had with him his entire family of four daughters, one a widow, one the wife of One Elk, the others young women, and two small sons. It appears that One Elk joined him in the flitting, for a purpose. The latter had a firm conviction that he was commissioned to keep the family into which he had married up to the standard in the matter of obedience to the agent. He was a simple-minded fellow, and it may be that he thought this removal in open defiance of orders was a high crime and might be visited vicariously upon himself. From time immemorial the Indian's sins were atoned for by his whole family. Or it may be that he thought to win favor with the authorities by showing that he would hesitate at nothing to compel obedience to the mandates of the agent. He, it appeared, had a great desire to become an agency policeman. And to show his capacity and zeal he took to the trail with Two Bulls.

For about a hundred miles he traveled with his father-in-law and the family; and when the old man and the outfit camped on the Mouse River, One Elk came to the conclusion that the outfit was going to the Fort Peck agency, Montana, and that it was his duty to stop the moving. He evidently thought that the safe thing to do would be to kill the old man, his wife, and the eldest daughter of Two Bulls. With this latter woman he was not on good terms. The three slept in one tepee, and One Elk and wife with the other members of the family occupied another. Early in the morning he took an axe and went into the tepee of Two Bulls. The eldest daughter, a widow, was doomed to die first, for of her One Elk was afraid. If he attacked the old man and she survived, there would be a fight. The three people lay sleeping. With one blow of the axe One Elk clove the skull of his sister-in-law and she died in her sleep; then he struck his father-in-law and there was no awakening in this world for Two Bulls. Another blow killed the mother-in-law; and One Elk came out, his bloody work finished, and ordered his wife and the surviving daughters of Two Bulls to cook breakfast. The women were frightened, but possessing the stolidity of Indian women, reasoned that what had been done could not be mended. The evening before, Two Bulls had been hunting and had killed some ducks. These were cooked and eaten within a few feet of the tepee in which lay the bodies of the hunter and his women-kind. Without more ado One Elk told the women and boys to pack up and follow him. He took the trail to Devils Lake, leaving Two Bulls and the women in the tepee.

The morning after the arrival of One Elk at Devils Lake the captain of police came and told me that One Elk had told of the murders. I thought the fellow had been boasting idly, as some Indians were prone to brag of having done inconceivable things. But the story was repeated, and I sent for One Elk. He did not hesitate telling me the story in detail, and said that he expected to be praised for his zeal.

"I made myself a policeman," he said. "You told Two Bulls not to leave the reservation. He left in spite of your policeman, and I thought I would do the Great Father a good turn and show him that the heart of One Elk was right. The old man would not come back, and I killed him."

I believe the fellow was disappointed because I did not at once show my appreciation of his zeal by putting him on the police force. Still I did not credit the awful story he told. He was so unmoved that I thought he must be insane or lying. He was neither one nor the other. I, however, sent Two Bulls' son, Brown Elk, and nephew, Little Bull, out to where One Elk said the camp stood, and there they found the bodies. The tepee had blown down but the bodies were there, bearing the wounds the slayer had described. One Elk had made no attempt to leave the reservation, and he was arrested when the story was found to be true.

In those days there was no telegraphic communication between the agency and the outside world, and it took two days to get a letter to the nearest telegraph station. The civil authorities were too busy to respond very promptly in the matter of taking charge of an Indian prisoner, even though he was charged with a triple murder. Consequently One Elk lay for some time in the military guardhouse. The agency jail was not very secure, but the military guardhouse was secure enough if properly watched. I knew by experience that it was not guarded closely enough to hold an Indian who wanted to get out, but One Elk did not appear to want to get his liberty. In this surmise I was wrong; for one night, after I had retired, I was awakened by a rapping at my door; I inquired who it was.

"One Elk," was the response.

I looked out and it was the murderer sure enough.

"I don't like the soldiers' guardhouse," he said; "put me in your guardhouse and I will stay, but a Sioux cannot remain a prisoner to the blue-coats."

I detained him and turned him over to Captain Mathey, Seventh Cavalry, the officer of the day. He was shackled and confined again, but he made a file of a case-knife, filed off his shackles, and crawled out through a little window just after sundown, arousing the garrison with the Indian whoop as he jumped to the ground. He was pursued and fired upon by the guard, but by swift running and dodging about he escaped the bullets that were sent after him. He got away safely, and was not heard of for more than a year. Then a report came down from Turtle Mountain that he had been living with the fugitive Sioux in Manitoba, Canada. One day he got into an altercation with an Indian named Red Boy, and when the affair was over One Elk lay dead.

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LIEUTENANT BULL HEAD IN INDIAN COSTUME

CHAPTER V

WHEN CUPID CAMPS WITH THE SIOUX

Romance and Magic enter into the Spirit of the Red Man's Wooing when he goes to take a Wife — Some Tragedies of the Reservation — Billy Squash and the Virgin Feast.

THE Indian in love is about as far removed from the ordinary white man's conception of an Indian lover as he is from the wooer Longfellow created in Hiawatha. He is very earnest, very ardent, not too secretive, and superstitious to a degree that is not to be conceived even by the young woman who expects to see the face of her sweetheart in the darkened mirror at Hallowe'en. And when the Indian lover becomes jealous in earnest, a tragedy is likely to be very near at hand. In all my experience of the Sioux, I have heard of few crimes involving the spilling of blood behind which there was not either superstition or a love-affair; and very generally both were at the bottom of the crime. And suicide for love — an expedient to which it would hardly be expected by those who are unacquainted with Indian character that my friend the Indian would resort — is not rare.

And let me here and now say that the stoicism of which so much is heard is no part of the Indian character. What has been described as stoicism, the trait that the Fenimore Coopers and other Indian romancers have been so fond of exploiting, is simply shyness or secretiveness. The Indian, as I have found him, and I have known the people under nearly all possible circumstances, is extremely shy with strangers, and this shyness takes the form of constitutional secretiveness in strenuous moments. The Indian child who appears savagely reticent to a stranger is very likely the most joyous romp with people he knows, be they white or red. He is shy as a wild thing is shy. The Indian man who suffers torture without making a sign is not indifferent to pain, nor especially desirous that he shall be regarded as indifferent. He is simply indulging his exaggerated tendency to secretiveness. An Indian in a crowd of whites will probably be wild with excitement over the strange things he sees, but he has too much regard for his own dignity to expose his sentiments. Let him understand he is among friends, or free from personal scrutiny, and he is as joyously exuberant as though he had never possessed either dignity or secretiveness. I think that the most hilarious lot of men I ever saw was a crowd of Sioux, many of whom had been on the war-path against the whites, and all of whom regarded themselves as men of importance among their people, — whom I took to see a musical comedy in Washington and who were treated to the sight of a comic opera. They forgot the place, the people, and their strange surroundings, and whooped for very joy. At home, among his friends, the Indian takes his pleasures with quite an abandon of mirth. His reserve, shyness, timidity, or whatever it is, but certainly not stoicism, shows itself only when he has a purpose to serve, and he throws his dignity to the winds when his risibles are touched. I have known, I may say intimately, the big men of the Sioux nation, and I knew very few who did not display real feeling for causes that would not touch the white man, — which brings me back to a case in point.

Chief Gall, whom I regarded as one of the biggest men of his nation, a warrior and councilor of high standing, and one to be reckoned with as the peer of Red Cloud and Spotted Tail among the great men of the Teton Sioux, lived all his days after he left the war-path on the Standing Rock reservation, and was my friend. I consulted with him on matters affecting the welfare of his people, and he came to me frankly with personal affairs that were sometimes staggering in their intimacy.

After he had passed his prime Gall fell in love. He was at that time the finest-looking Indian I had ever seen, and but a very few years previous, he need have asked no man's advice as to what he should do if he wanted a woman for a wife; and in those days it would have made no particular difference if he had happened to be encumbered with one or more wives at the time. One morning in the year 1885, — Gall had ceased to be a hostile and buried the hatchet finally in 1881, — he came to the office at the agency and asked for a private interview. He was a fine, big man, showing in his attitude the pride he had in his chieftaincy and his prowess as a warrior. The finest typical picture of an Indian extant is a photograph of Gall taken about this time. He was very mysterious in his actions on this particular morning, which was the more surprising, in that he was habitually open and even impressive in his carelessness of surroundings. He looked about to see that we were alone and then said: —

"Father, I have come to have a talk." (The Sioux invariably address their agent as father.)

I was ready to hear him, and told him so. He continued: —

"When you came here [some four years previously] we agreed, you and I, that I should come and talk straight when I wanted advice and that we were to be friends."

"How," said I; "How" meaning good, right, well-done, or anything you like in the way of approbation, in addition to its usual use as a term of greeting and farewell.

And "How," rejoined the chief, then he continued: "I have been your friend; you are my friend. I told you that I would give up the customs of my people and live as the white men do, as nearly as I could. Have I done that?"

I assured him that I was perfectly content, and that he had been all I could ask. And he went on: —

"Father, I have changed my habits; I follow the footsteps of the white man, for I know he is wiser than I am and that the Indian way is no longer the way to go. But, my friend, I cannot change my heart. We may catch a bird but we cannot make it change its tune. My heart is good, but it is sad, for I am in love."

Gall blushed. Men who know the Indian intimately will understand that this is literally true, — that this big warrior, who had been ruthless in his warfare and who had lived for forty years and more in the open, whose red skin was browned by the sun, who had painted his face every winter to keep the skin from chapping and painted it again in the summer to keep it from burning, blushed like a white-skinned girl.

But he looked me straight in the eye. There was reason for his blushing, in the shape of an elderly dame who sat at home waiting for her lord to return from the agency, and Gall knew that I was thinking of her.

"I know it is not right," continued the chief, "for I have said I will be as the white man, and what Pizi [Gall] says, he will do. But I have thought much about this. I have a wife. If I had not given my word to you, I might take another. The woman I love lives in the lodge of another, but I know she loves me and would come to me. You are my friend and I have given you my word. Will you give me back my word? My heart is very sad."

I knew the man and his kind so well that I did not see the humor of the situation and was never so little inclined to laugh in my life. I know now that if I had laughed the history of the Sioux on the Standing Rock reservation might have been written very differently, for Gall was as proud and sensitive as he was ingenuous in this confession. I made him a speech, forgetting the humor of the thing, and talked as I knew the man who led the Indian soldiers at the battle of the Little Big Horn would expect to be talked to. I told him that one of the important things in the turning of the Indian into a white man was the taking of a single wife; how the white man had become great by making marriage a solemn thing to which only two people could become parties. I showed him how necessary it was that the big men of his tribe should accept this custom of the white man in order that the others might follow their example; how it was needful that men who expected to accomplish great things must make sacrifices, and how these sacrifices would be appreciated by the Great Father. There was no use appealing to his religious sensibilities, for Gall held to the Indian code and there was nothing in that to prevent polygamy. And I held him firmly to his promise that he would continue to be the best man on the reservation. I could see no way, I told him, whereby I could do anything for him.

Gall made me a speech. He told me that he knew it was in the power of the agent to divorce people. I pointed out to him that this was only done where a man had more than one wife, and wanted to put all but one away and make other provision for them. He said his wife was old and he wanted but one — the one he did n't have. I had to refuse to interfere, flatly but diplomatically, and made him understand that I wanted him for a friend but he must abide by the white man's rule.

He thought for a moment, then said: —

"I have promised to go the white man's way and I stand by my word, but I might not have promised if I thought my heart would sing again at the coming of a woman. I will pay the price of being as white men are."

The big fellow shook hands and went out. I heard no more of Gall's love-affair.

Polygamy amongst the Indians never had any sort of religious sanction. It was tolerated on the ground that man should be regarded as the master of his own household, and that it could make no difference to the community how many wives he had. It made some difference to the individual, however, and most marriages were made through selection. Custom made the Sioux a polygamist. The Sioux in his wild state had an option on the whole family in case there was no brother or male cousin and more than one maiden in the household containing the object of his affections, the sisters becoming subject to his disposal; under tribal law, if he married the eldest one he was privileged to wed them all or dispose of them in marriage as they reached marriageable age. But notwithstanding the inferior position of the woman in the tribe, it was generally understood that the wife by choice — who very nearly always got the man of her choice — managed to take care of her own, and the sisters generally made shift to marry other men without disturbing the household. The older men, who took additional wives as they increased in years and wealth, clung to the institution and their polygamous households, and it was the demoralizing effect they exercised in the community that gave the administration most trouble in the civilizing processes.

When the hostiles came in and were located at Standing Rock, polygamous families were numerous. Many of the chiefs and other men of importance had plural wives. Sitting Bull had two wives at the end, though the roll of his list of wives would undoubtedly have been largely increased had any one ever gone to the trouble of looking them up. He was not a nice character, Sitting Bull; he took what looked good to him, whether it was a woman or property of other sort, and he was not in any sense typical of his people. I never heard that he had a love-affair, and the measure of the man was shown when Bishop Marty tried to induce him to put away one of his wives. He went to see the Bishop, who was visiting the missions. The Bishop pointed out to him the evil of his ways, and the bad influence he exerted among the people, finally asking him if he would not put away one of his wives. Sitting Bull was crafty.

"You think that I should put away one wife and that would be good?" he asked.

"It would, and the woman would be taken care of. You should keep only your first wife."

"But I cannot put one away; I like them both and would not like to treat them differently."

The Bishop admitted that it might be hard, but one should be put away, the second wife.

"But I could put them both away without injuring either one," said Sitting Bull.

"You could do that," was the reply of the good man, thinking he was making some headway.

"The black gown is my friend," rejoined Sitting Bull, "and I will do this for him; I will put away both my wives, and the black gown will get me a white wife."

The Bishop gave him up as incorrigible, and the old chief retained both his wives to the end.

Polygamy is giving way to missionary teachings and the efforts of the Indian Department to discourage it. I suppose that Standing Rock is as good an example of the reservations still held by the Indians in common as there is in the country. In 1881 there were upwards of two hundred polygamous families on that reservation, and it now contains only three. The heads of the households are all old men, and with their passing the institution will not have to be reckoned with. Mad Bear has two wives, Red Fish has two, and His Thunder Shield the same number.

In the attempt to do away with polygamy at Standing Rock more than one tragedy was enacted, and I am reminded now of the affair of Matozee (Yellow Bear), the son of Running Walk, the latter being a man of some importance at the time and a friend of mine.

In early times, when the Sioux were still largely pagan and the agency represented all the authority of any sort that they could see outside of their tribal rules, the agent was the arbiter of their destinies in many directions. He licensed them to marry and married them, in preference to permitting them to marry without any sort of ceremony that might be regarded as formal and binding. So numerous were these marriages performed by me, in the effort to bring the hostiles to a sense of the importance of government, that a facetious army officer at Fort Yates, in speaking with some eastern tourists of the religious denominations on the reservation, said that there were Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and McLaughlinites. Justice was necessarily administered by the Agent, and sharp correction was sometimes given those who could not be restrained by the tribal rules. The Indian justiciary system, with its invaluable police adjunct, was just then coming into existence.

It was in my capacity as administrator of justice that there was brought before me one day in the spring of 1882 the Indian Matozee. He was charged with having carried off against her will a young woman whom he had long pursued. The man was already married. The woman had escaped from him, but he had followed her and taken her again to his tepee. There was no doubt about the fellow's guilt, and he could not be induced to promise to behave himself. I put him in the guardhouse and kept him there. I have forgotten how long he was confined, but perhaps for ten or fifteen days. He remained sullen throughout his imprisonment, and made no promise when he was sent away and told to leave the woman alone or he would be returned to prison. To some of the people he talked and said he loved the woman and could not live without her. He was a savage, pure and simple, regarding his own right. He was quite capable of taking the woman, and he declined to admit the right of anybody to interfere except in a fight, and he was quite willing for that. His passion had made him mad. He went again to the place where the woman lived, and tried to take her. He was brought to the agency and given another fifteen-day sentence. When he was turned loose, his spirit was broken but he was not cured. He sat in his tepee and brooded for a day. One morning he rode to the Agent's residence, occupied by myself and family. It was very early, and Mrs. McLaughlin was alone outside. The man had a gun and his manner was threatening enough. My wife, speaking the Sioux language fluently, had always had great influence with the people, and she talked with Yellow Bear and told him the error of his way and the bad effect it must have on himself. She kept him in such a position that he had no chance to use his rifle while she was not looking. Somebody else came out of the house, and he dashed away, muttering and gesticulating. The sound of a gunshot coming from his tepee shortly after attracted the attention of the people; he had shot himself mortally and died within a few hours.

But the Sioux lover is much more inclined to the killing of somebody else than to suicide. The suicide solution of a love-problem has been applied but infrequently, for the Indian is restrained from taking his own life by his superstitions. He fears to face the shades with a self-inflicted death wound. I have known of many Indian women killing themselves for love, and of eight cases of self-destruction among men. The women hang or drown themselves, the men using deadly weapons.

There was the case of Horned Dog; he became infatuated with a grass widow, young and handsome; she had been married at Devils Lake, but had left her husband and was free. With her uncle, Cow Head, she had been on a visit to relatives on the Standing Rock reservation all winter. Horned Dog, who was already married, saw her frequently at dances and feasts during the winter, and fell madly in love with her. She was not at all averse to marriage, but she had no idea of becoming a plural wife, and she showed Horned Dog the door of her uncle's tepee. The lover would not be dismissed. He followed her everywhere, and Cow Head proceeded to take her off the reservation in the early spring. He took his own family and the young woman and crossed the Missouri on his return trip to Devils Lake. Their first camp was made a mile or so north of the crossing, near the agency. That night Horned Dog arrived at the camp and refused to leave. He could not be forced out, under the laws of Indian hospitality. The next morning early he shot twice at the woman, one bullet striking her in the thigh and another in the left forearm. Thinking he had killed the widow, Horned Dog turned his gun on himself, and fell lifeless beside her. She was brought to the agency and her arm amputated — which did not prevent her from getting another husband during the summer.

Romancers have written much of the poetry of the Indian lover, and there is, no doubt, much of poetical feeling in the sentiments expressed by the young Indian who would a-wooing go, — or was in the days when the Indian nature had freeness of expression; but my experience and knowledge of the Indian leads me to believe that he is inclined to be fierce rather than sentimental in his outward manifestations of the entertainment of the gentle passion. Some of the great chiefs I have known had really fine characters marred by the fierceness of their passions. There, for instance, was Spotted Tail, who made his entrance into the public life of his people by means of a bloody encounter with a rival for the possession of a girl of their tribe, and who was killed on account of a similar affair.

Spotted Tail was a Brule Sioux, and a great leader in spite of the fact that he was rather inclined to treat diplomatically with the whites than to take the war-path. He never led his band into battle after the surrender of Ash Hollow in the sixties, and he promoted the treaty for the opening of the Bozeman route into Montana, even after his people had practically all deserted him to follow the fortunes of Red Cloud. That Red Cloud was the bigger man and the greater chief there is no doubt, for he came to be regarded with superstitious awe by his people, who thought he must be possessed of some powerful medicine, so successful was he on the war-path.

Spotted Tail was not an hereditary chief, but came into leadership as a young man. He had been out with his people, but had not particularly distinguished himself up to the age of twenty. He was a fine-looking young fellow, and he remained a fine-looking man all his life. It was while his people were living in the Platte River country, a considerable distance southwest of the place of his death on the Rosebud reservation, that he fell in love with Appearing Day, who is described by the old people of her band as possessing all the beauty and virtues that a woman of the Sioux can possess. Divinely tall, if not divinely fair, she was sought by many suitors, but had repulsed them all and remained in the tepee of her father, a chief of standing, long beyond the age at which a maiden of the Sioux generally marries. She had grown up beside Spotted Tail; it was known that they were in love, and the youth took advantage of every opportunity to seek the favor of her father. This favor he did not possess, the father having so loved his daughter that he refused to give her in marriage to many wealthy and desirable suitors.

Among the foremost of these suitors, and the one most persistent in his suit, was Running Bear, a chief who had won his title to consideration on the battlefield and in the council-lodge. He had two wives already, but that was no handicap in his wooing, for he was rich in horses, was in the prime of life, and was apparently destined to sit among the great ones of his people. And Spotted Tail knew that Running Bear was favored by the father of Appearing Day, and he feared that the girl might be given to the elder man, though she had sworn to her lover that she would die or elope with him sooner than follow Running Bear to his lodge. The elder man knew by instinct that Spotted Tail alone stood between him and the realization of his hopes, and he hated the young man, who, having but just become a soldier, dared to aspire to the hand of the woman loved by a chief.

Affairs had approached a crisis when, one day in the spring, the rivals met outside the village on the North Platte. Running Bear told the young man that he must give over his pretensions, that unless he would leave the girl alone and bind himself to do so by a promise on the spot, he might prepare to die. History has not preserved the reply of Sintegleska (Spotted Tail), but it is probable that he made a speech, for he was always the diplomat. It is known that almost instantly the two had drawn their knives and were locked in each other's arms in a death-struggle. When the people reached the scene of the battle they were clasped together, but the knife of Spotted Tail was buried in the heart of his rival and the young man himself hacked very nearly to death. Appearing Day, putting aside her maiden reserve, bound up the wounds of her lover and nursed him back to life. To win such a fight, and with such an opponent, was quite enough to establish Spotted Tail high in the esteem of his people, and there was no father in the Sioux nation who would then have refused him the hand of his daughter. The lovers were married, and during Appearing Day's life they were devotedly attached to each other, so that the story of this happily mated couple is still remembered by the older people of the band.

It may have been to show that after her death he had no heart to give any woman, or because he had broadened in his affections, but the fact remains that one of the first things Spotted Tail did when he was elected to the chieftainship of his band was to marry two women, neither of whom bore any resemblance to the beautiful Appearing Day, being neither well-favored nor remarkable for their attributes of mind; but he lived with them through a long and, from the Indian point of view, more or less successful career. He had avoided the blunders of Red Cloud, and had treated with the whites or sat down at the agency while the people went on the war-path. But he was a strong man and a natural leader, which brought to him such a large following that the Spotted Tail agency — now known as the Rosebud — became quite celebrated. He was living there and drawing to what might have been the peaceful close of a life that had brought him some honors and the consideration of the government, when he fell in love again. This time, with an old man's passion, he fixed his favor on a married woman, the wife of a cripple named Medicine Bear. The woman appears to have been passive in the matter, though not averse to changing her place in the lodge of her husband for that of the favorite wife of a great chief. Whether by prearrangement or not, Spotted Tail seized the woman and bore her off. He made some sort of an attempt to mollify the husband by offering him compensation for the wife he had lost, and the matter might have been arranged, but that one Crow Dog, a friend of the abused husband, made it a blood feud. He met Spotted Tail riding in a wagon, on August 5, 1881, and shot the chief dead.

The event which put a period to the romantic adventures of Spotted Tail was fraught with important consequences, for it resulted in establishing the status of the Indian before the law. Crow Dog went into hiding until his friends had made compensation to the family of Spotted Tail for his murder. The adjustment was made according to tribal custom, and the affair was settled so far as the Indians were concerned; but Spotted Tail was a man of too much importance for the authorities to permit his assassin to go unpunished. Crow Dog was arrested and brought to trial, was convicted, and the case appealed. The contention was made on behalf of Crow Dog that, he being an Indian and not a citizen of the United States, the court had no jurisdiction; that having been dealt with according to the custom of his tribe for the offense, he was not amenable to prosecution by federal or other courts. The United States Supreme Court, to which the case was carried, took this view of the case and discharged the accused man. The decision resulted in the enactment of legislation which brought all Indians under the laws of the states or territories in which they reside, making them amenable under the laws thereof for felonious crimes not punishable by the federal code.

These incidents recalled do not argue much for the moral restraint of the Indian, and it is apparent that time has had but little chastening influence on him as regards his views of connubial life; but I must add, in justification of the people, that they hold nothing more sacred than the purity of a maiden. Severe punishment and ostracism are meted out to the man who disparages a woman, and I remember witnessing on more than one occasion a "virgin feast" proving the chastity of a maiden.

While I was agent at Devils Lake agency such a feast was held, and the discomfiture of the traducer was complete.

One Wamnuha (Billy Squash), a fine-looking young Indian who looked upon himself as a sort of lady-killer, had traduced the character of Lucy Provincial; the girl was young, handsome, popular, and well-behaved, but her good conduct had not saved her from Billy's tongue. She had rejected the fellow and he was piqued. The stories he told about her came to her ears, and she took prompt measures to justify herself, according to the custom of her people. She made a virgin feast.

All the maidens of her acquaintance were invited, and the affair was set for ration day and held on the most prominent spot of the agency grounds, in front of the commissary building. Word was sent all over the reservation and there was a great gathering of the people. The girls engaged in the feast numbered eight or ten, and they were seated in a circle about a small oblong stone, the sacred stone used in all medicine feasts and called literally "The Grandfather." Beside this sacred stone Lucy stuck a knife into the ground. A dish of food was passed to each of the girls by the giver of the feast, and the people, some hundreds of them, stood about in a larger circle, Billy well to the front, and receiving a great deal of attention in the form of jibing from the other young men. He kept his blanket well about his ears, but gave no evidence of any intention of weakening.

The girls having finished eating, Lucy stood up and announced that she had been talked about, that the talk was lies, and that if any man within the sound of her voice could say anything detrimental to her, he should then and there announce it publicly, and should his accusation be substantiated, she would either go with him (as was the custom in such instances) or be as an outcast among her people.

Billy laughed uneasily, and his friends tried to push him into the circle. Lucy repeated her defiance and the other girls offered a similar challenge. Billy, coerced by his fellows, finally mustered enough courage to step forward and reach out his hand to Lucy. The girl plucked the knife out of the ground, seized Billy by the blanket, and tried to drag him into the circle of maidens. The fellow resisted, and she flourished the knife and insisted that he should tell his story, her eyes flashing and her tongue going at a rate that might have discomfited a bolder man than Billy Squash. The fellow resisted as the girl dragged him forward to make his accusation, and at last slipped out of his blanket, leaving it in the hands of the enraged girl, and raced across the prairie. Lucy ran after him, but he got away. The girl was vindicated and Billy Squash was thereafter treated with contempt by the people who had witnessed the ceremony.

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SPOTTED TAIL

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CHAPTER VI

HOW CROW KING STOPPED THE MEDICINE MEN

How the Sioux Chief rebuked the Hunkpapa Fakirs and contributed to the Downfall of a Great Indian Institution.

A GRAY shadow lay on the face of Crow King, and in the silence of the night, when no sound broke the stillness but the dim echoing howl of the coyote far up the valley of the Yellowstone, the chief lay in his tepee and saw the beckoning fingers of the ghosts inviting him to join his fathers in the spirit land. And Crow King, having some doubts about his standing among the shades and valuing properly his earthly place as a chief of the Hunkpapas and a man of much weight in the councils of the Sioux, was not inclined to heed the beckoning fingers and the invitation of the shadowy faces he turned away from.

"Crow King is not a woman, to die of an ache in his lodge," said the chief to his wife, who tended him with the tenderness of a loving woman, for all her face was swarthy between the two braids of her raven hair and her fingers hard from the toil of the camp.

For was it not the duty of a Sioux woman to toil, even though her husband had many horses and was a warrior with whom few of his people could measure head or body? And Red Bird had loved Crow King with the affection of a strong nature for a strong man ever since that day when Crow King took from her hand the rich food that was to recover him from the fearful ordeal of his first sun-dance — and that was years before, in the land of the Tetons by the banks of the Big Muddy.

In those far days, when the Teton Sioux lived in Indian ease close by the feeding-ground of his uncle, Pte, the buffalo; while the white man was still compelled to lust in fear and longing for possession of the hills in which were hidden the yellow stones his heart coveted; when Sitting Bull and Gall, Crow King and Black Moon, and others who wrote their names in red on the lands of the Dakotas in later days, were but young men and well regarded, but had not yet attained to the places of dignity among their people, — in those days Crow King saw Red Bird and wanted her for his wife, to live by his side, to follow him when the people took the trail to hunt the game in the valleys between the Missouri and the great hills to the west, or to perpetrate on the bodies of their foes, the Crows, those disdainful scars that would disgrace the warrior among the ghosts. And Red Bird was quite willing to leave the lodge of her father and follow Crow King, who, even as a young man, gave promise of being rich in those attributes which once made all that there was for manhood in the sight of a Sioux maiden. But she would not share the tepee of Crow King with any other woman, and she would take the young man when she knew that she had the only place in his heart. Thus it came that, under the broiling sun of a midsummer day, Crow King and other young men offered themselves in sacrifice at a great sun-dance, which the medicine men had ordered before the band started on a journey to the west, and which might be full of perils. They would placate "Onk-te-gi," the spirit which has its abiding-place in the body of the ground animal, and propitiate all the evil spirits of the earth; and they would offer prayers and sacrifice to the Great Spirit, to the end that their undertaking might not be made difficult by the machinations of the evil ones and that they might be blessed in their hunting and find their enemies, the Crows, rich in ponies, by the benign influence of the Great Spirit.

With prayers and offerings the medicine men cut gashes in the breasts and shoulders of Crow King, and they picked up with cruel knives the hard muscles that lay under the red skin, and beneath these muscles they thrust strong little skewer-sticks; and to the ends of these sticks they fastened the split end of a lariat, and the other end they fastened to poles and drew tight, so that Crow King, by standing on his toes, might escape being suspended from his shoulders and his breasts. And there Crow King danced and whistled, that the people who sat in the great circle about the medicine lodge and watched the dancers might know that his courage was great and that he disregarded the torture. While the sun made a day's journey Crow King and the other young men danced and bore the pangs of suffering, which was so great that their muscles stood out rigid like the sinews of the buffalo and their throats were parched so that they could not utter a sound, for it was not permitted that they might drink during the dance.

So for a day Crow King endured, and his fortitude and disdain of suffering made the old men remark that there was a man, and the maidens admired in secret, and one of them wept and hoped that the dance might soon be over. And it ended when the muscles to which the lariats were fastened, before and behind, were broken and torn by the motions of the dancer, and gave way, and the dancer fell out of the circle, his courage attested and the spirits propitiated. Then the medicine men rubbed into the gaping wounds on Crow King's breast and back a handful of earth, and he went to the feast, accepting from the hands of Red Bird the water and food he so craved. And they two were plighted and wed, Crow King taking of his choicest horses and leaving them at the doorway of the lodge of Red Bird's father, and taking away his bride, clad in the beautifully beaded bridal robe which had been made by her grandmother. With a brave heart and sound head, Crow King took a wife wise and beautiful, and the people said they would prosper as man and wife.

Now for five winters and as many summers had Crow King and Red Bird lived as man and wife, and although no child had come to their tepee, they were still bound by their affection and Red Bird was envied of the women whose husbands regarded them lightly, even as Crow King was envied of the men whom he governed as a chief, by reason of his skill in warfare and in the chase. Therefore it was an evil day for Red Bird when Crow King told her that he was called by the ghosts, and she wept in the darkened lodge. For she could save Crow King only by having a disgrace put upon her that would make the other women of her people to point the finger of scorn at her. Crow King, in after days, when he had come to be the friend of the white man, told me of this thing and of the great grief it brought upon him.

Crow King and his people had been fighting with their old enemies the Crows. Far into the Crow country, out beyond the Milk River and near to the country of the Red Jackets, had the Sioux carried the war, and they were rich in plunder and horses, for the Crows had taken the horses of the Piegans and had these and their own when the warriors of the Tetons descended on them. And there was bitter fighting, for the Crows were worthy foes and did not leave their ponies and their women an easy prey to their hereditary enemies. One day there had been hard fighting between the people of Crow King's band and the Crows, and when it was over, and each party had withdrawn, there were many dead and many wounded, and the Hunkpapas — who did not retreat — saw their enemies withdraw, then broke their camp and started for the country to the south, where they might refresh their horses and give heed to their wounds.

And the most grievously wounded of those who had not been sent to the land of ghosts was Crow King. A Crow arrow had passed through his body, and he felt the blood in his lungs. He was marked for death, and, according to the custom of his people, he refused to be a burden to those who would be the better for going rapidly out of the enemy's country, and he directed that he be left to die where none might see him, on the prairie, and that Red Bird, who had remained behind in the encampment when the war party went forth, should be told that he died like a man. So they left him in a deep ravine where there was water and shelter, and with him they picketed his horse, that he might not be dismounted in the land of the shades. They also left with him food and tobacco — not for his physical comfort, for he was past the need of that, but for the comfort of his ghost after the earthly end. And he lay alone in the ravine where no enemy might see him, and drew his blanket over his head and waited for death.

His people were not heartless in this, but it was part of their ceremonial so to dispose of the dead or dying, that they might not be an encumbrance on the living. When Reno left Custer, to surprise the Sioux camp on the Little Big Horn, in the early morning of June 25, 1876, his line of march took him past a very handsomely decorated and valuable tepee which contained nothing but the corpse of an Indian. The Sioux who were in that fight on the Little Big Horn told me years afterward that the corpse was that of a man killed seven days previous in a skirmish with the Crows and Shoshones, and, fearing that they would have a long march and be unable to give the body proper mortuary honors, they left it in their best tepee on the prairie. The dead Indian in the tepee was the brother of Chief Circling Bear.

Thus it was that Crow King sat down alone to await the coming of the death that he did not fear, but his thoughts were of Red Bird and he sorrowed that he might not see her again. And in the fevered nights he had visions and the ghosts were close to him.

"I know not how many nights I lay there," said Crow King; "but always there came a ghost, foremost among all, who told me that I might yet live among my people if I would but vow that I would forget my pride and my place as a warrior, and for one day be as a dog and go on all fours about the camp of my people and take with me Red Bird. For many nights I would not make the vow, and each day I dragged myself to the water and drank and did not die. There came a night when the ghosts were thick and my heart was weak and sad, and I made the promise and vowed that Red Bird and myself would be as dogs among them, prowling through the camp during one sun. Then the ghosts gave me strength, and I mounted my horse and traveled for many days on the broad trail of my people before I reached our village.

"They ran from me when I rode, starved and near dying, into the village, for they thought it was the ghost of Crow King; but Red Bird came to me and took me to her lodge of mourning and nursed me. And I told her the vow I had made; but she, mourning, cried that I had lost my senses. So it was that I lay for many nights and saw the ghosts, and they jeered at me for not keeping my vow and demanded that I do so or die and be with them. These things I told Red Bird, and she, fearing I might die, consented that she would go with me and keep my promise."

One morning, when the dogs of the village were reconnoitring the outer lodges, there appeared among them a man and a woman, Crow King and Red Bird, going about on all fours and eating of the scraps that were thrown to the dogs. The people followed them about, jeering, and Red Bird hid her face, but kept her promise through the length of the day. This story I was told by many of the people, and also the end of it, years after.

With the going down of the sun, Crow King and his wife went to their tepee and became as man and woman again, but never thereafter as man and wife. The shame that Red Bird endured killed her love for Crow King, but she remained in his tepee uncomplainingly for a long time. Crow King became well and strong, but there was a great grief on him, and he sorrowed that he had not died as a man. No man pointed the finger of scorn at him, for he was quick to see a jibe, and ready and able to take care of himself and his honor as a warrior. The occurrence made no difference in his standing in the tribe, but with Red Bird it was different: the women and the children made mock of her, and she grew to hate the man who had made her the scorn of the camp.

For two years she lived in the tepee of Crow King and said no word, but sorrowed. Then there came one day a young man of another band visiting, and while Crow King was sitting in council, Red Bird got up, and left his lodge, and went with the stranger, eloping to live among strange people. Crow King did not pursue them, nor did he show any anger, but when, two winters later, his band made a camp close to the village in which lived Red Bird and the man with whom she had eloped, he sought them out, and taking with him two of his best horses gave them to the new husband of Red Bird and told him he hoped the woman was happy and he would help her husband to riches, for he had put a great shame on her and she was right in leaving him.

The loss of Red Bird did not put Crow King out of favor with fortune, and that in spite of the fact that he would have no more to do with ghosts or medicine of any sort, until the time when his brother, High Bear, fell ill. Crow King dearly loved his brother

High Bear, who had a wasting disease, and the medicine men of the Hunkpapas said that he was possessed of an evil spirit which should be exorcised. Had there been a white doctor in the neighborhood he might have told them that High Bear had tuberculosis, and that it would presently be unnecessary to employ any medicine man.

In despair, but with belief, Crow King told the big medicine man of the band to cure his brother and he would pay the bill. He attacked High Bear with as much vigor as though he was a white medicine man and the patient the possessor of a vermiform appendix and rich relatives. With charms and incantations, he attacked the devil that was making High Bear cough and pine, and for every new form of treatment he invented a new excuse for a charge and took ponies from Crow King, who owned more horses than any man of his band. The medicine man might have felt some justification in relieving Crow King of his horses, in the knowledge that he had come by those same horses by means a little more high-handed, but not more honest, than those he was practicing. Horses and buffalo robes constituted the wealth of the Sioux in those days, for of money and the things money could buy they knew nothing. And Crow King, the Crœsus of his band, was like to be impoverished unless the medicine man hurried the process of nature and brought about the taking off of High Bear sooner than the course of his disorder warranted. For, inspired by the richness of the reward, he subjected the patient to such rigorous treatment, that he might well elect to die to escape it.

It was a common practice of the southwestern and western Indians to kill the medicine man who pretended to be able to cure a patient and failed. And this was just enough, for the medicine man of the Indians never admitted that there was any doubt about his medicine — there was no "perhaps" in his treatment. He announced that he could cure the patient if he liked. I have heard of cases well within the memory of man, when the death of the medicine man followed at once on his failure to cure the patient, and the taking-off of the quack was by very violent means. This practice was never resorted to among the Sioux to my knowledge, or in the memory of the older Indians. The medicine man of the Sioux may have been sharper than his fellow bunco-man to the south and west, or it may be that he did not commit himself to the point of defaulting his own life. He always claims to have power of life and death, and when his treatment fails, he simply explains that the medicine of a power he could not reach or cope with was more potent than his medicine. He once wielded a tremendous power, but it is fast disappearing, so far as the outer and visible evidences of his old-time glory are concerned. And the affair of High Bear had much to do with breaking down the faith of the people in the medicine men.

At the time of which I speak the medicine men were not so numerous among the Sioux living beyond the Missouri River as among those bands living to the east. The Hunkpapas, a band of the Trans-Missouri Sioux, from which sprang many of their biggest chiefs, supplied a very considerable share of the medicine men of the Tetons. They did not live always with one band, but went about visiting with their faking brethren of the other bands. And it is probable that, although each individual knew himself to be a pretender, each was afraid that the other might have real medicine and destroy him with it. Therefore it was that, when High Bear was sick, and the most profitable patient in the Sioux nation, his doctors were not restricted to those of his own band, the Hunkpapas, but included many eminent fakirs from the other bands to the west of the Missouri.

Upon High Bear they practiced their many arts. Each medicine man had for a fetich a charm of mighty power, with which he accomplished his magic. One would work through the potent agency of an eagle's claw, another cast out devils by means of the magic of an elk's horn, another by being possessor of the secret power in the claw of a bear. The medicine was generally in the form of some relic of a departed bird, beast, or fish. Some avoided the use of any charm, and I knew, and know still, an old fellow called Eats-No-Fish, whose peculiar powers were supposed to be derived from the abstinence from fish-eating which his name implies.

A score of medicine men offered to try their arts upon High Bear, to no purpose. The man in charge tried to reduce his daily fever by the use of the sweat-bath, alternating with icy plunges — and these promoted the disorder, to the great delight of the fakirs, who insisted that a devil could be cast out only by the use of a more potent spirit, one declaring that the sick man had in his stomach bad medicine in the form of an eagle claw, with which some evil-disposed medicine man had hoodooed him; that he could not practice upon the patient and have him disgorge the claw, but would perform a spell by transferring the claw to his own stomach and so get rid of it. The test, made in public, was successful, in so far that it carried the medicine man to the very verge of the grave according to the testimony of his own lips; his writhings were dreadful when he proclaimed that the bad medicine had taken up its abode in him. Further incantations resulted in the ejectment of a tremendous claw from the mouth of the medicine man. The cure was effected to the satisfaction of the concourse of people who witnessed the working of the medicine. But High Bear died. And Crow King was ruined, for his horses he had given to the medicine man, and the rest of his goods went to those who, according to tribal custom, could seize them. Then it was that Crow King washed his hands of the medicine men and administered a blow to superstition that lingered in the minds of the people for many moons. Incidentally he put the tribe of quacks out of business.

Crow King made a feast. He was no longer a widower. It is not good for a white man to live alone, but it is out of the question for an Indian to live in a womanless wigwam. He had taken unto himself a wife who did the work of the household. To her he gave orders to prepare the feast. Three tepees he joined together to make a great lodge. A dog soldier he sent forth, furnished with the little sticks that each Sioux of any station used, peculiarly marked, like the invitation-cards of the white man, and each medicine man received one of the sticks as a notification that he was expected as a guest, and to bring with him the medicine outfit through which he derived his supernatural power.

The woman cooked the viands: dainty bits of buffalo-hump, selected portions of deer meat, Indian turnips and sugar in quantity; for, although Crow King was impoverished, his credit was good, his friends knew that there were many ponies for Crow King in the Crow pastures. In the centre of the great lodge a roaring fire was built, and around the inner walls of the lodge were seated the medicine men. Then Crow King made a speech. He told his guests that they were great medicine men, their charms were potent, and their influence with the spirits such as to make them feared of all men. He had bidden them to a feast, but before the feasting, he would ask that they rejoice his eyes with a sight of the charms with which they performed their wonders. And each medicine man, seeing the opportunity to exploit the potency of his particular fetich, produced a medicine-bag and took from it, with an elaboration of ceremony, the charm that he worked by. Crow King walked about the circle, and took from each his medicine-sack containing his charm: a bear claw in one, the foot of a rabbit in another, the dried eye of a wolf in a third, and so on, until he had accumulated practically all the medicine then standing between the Hunkpapa Sioux and untoward fate, in the form of evil spirits. And the whole lot, including the medicine-bags, he threw into the fire.

The medicine men looked to see the impious one drop dead; the crowd gathered before the open lodge groaned. Crow King made another speech. He told them that their medicine was a lie, and that they had robbed him as they had always robbed the people. He invited them to take what revenge they might on him, but not to let him catch them at it. Then he ordered the food served, and they were constrained to eat with what appetite they might.

Christianizing influences have gone far to redeem the Sioux from their more nonsensical superstitions, but the old men at Standing Rock still speak with awe of the time when Crow King defied the ghosts and the medicine men, and left the people without a charm to save them from the powers of evil. And that feast was the beginning of the end of the medicine man among the Sioux, as an institution.

As the representative of the government at Standing Rock agency, I had come to know Crow King and to regard him highly as a man of influence who might be depended upon to exert that influence in the right direction. He had been with Sitting Bull, and was one of the lieutenants of that worthy in the campaign that put an end to the war strength of the Sioux. When he had come into the agency as a hostile, I found him to be a man who could be depended on to do what he agreed to. We had an understanding, and I was easily content to do nothing that would affect his standing or influence with his people; for although the government no longer recognized the tribal authority of the chief, still it was easier to deal with one man of influence than to have to deal with many irresponsible ones.

I wanted Crow King for my friend, on account of the uprightness of his character and the importance of his attitude in the eyes of the other Indians — and they were far from being a gentle, easily handled lot in those days, when the light of the war-fires was still in the eyes of many of them. Crow King had met me in many matters of importance, but in the most important aim of my administration he was loath to listen to me. I was trying to get the late hostiles to put their children into the school, and wanted a few of the head men to set an example by sending their children in. Crow King had a daughter, then about eight years old, the child of the wife who succeeded Red Bird, and he would not, in the beginning, consent to part with her. I talked to him frequently about placing her in the agency boarding school, and his answer invariably was "Toksta" (wait awhile); he would do anything else I asked him, but he would not consent to place his girl in school.

This trait — love of children — is the most common characteristic of the Indian father and mother. The affection displays itself in lavish form and terms of endearment, and the parents idolize the children, who in their turn show the most unbounded affection for both father and mother. I have seen a boy returned from a non-reservation school, bearing all the consciousness of his superiority to his earlier associates, run half a mile to meet, embrace, and fondle his father or mother, veritable old blanket Indians.

If Crow King could be induced to give up his girl and put her in school, I might feel that I had made a start with the children of the other late hostiles, of whom there were about three thousand on the reservation. This he refused to do for some months, but always with the encouraging word, "Toksta." One evening early in the spring of 1882, while engaged in my office, I was told that Crow King was outside and wanted to see me. I went out. He stood at the door, holding a horse by a rawhide lariat; on the horse was seated a girl, his daughter.

He made no speech, or uttered a word, but put into my hand the rein by which he led the horse, and turned away to hide his grief at parting with his child, whom I placed in the agency boarding-school that evening, admonishing the principal to see that the girl was given every possible care and attention to make her contented, with the hope that other Indians of the hostile camp might be induced to send in their children, which hope was fully realized during the following summer.

The horse upon which Crow King brought his daughter to me was a six-year-old iron gray, trained to buffalo-hunting, of more than ordinary swiftness, and the only one he owned at the time. When the hostile Sioux surrendered, at Camp Poplar River, Forts Buford and Keogh, they were dismounted and disarmed, but the principal chiefs were each permitted to retain one horse. This iron gray, being Crow King's favorite horse, was retained by him, and taken down the Missouri River from Fort Buford to Standing Rock agency on the same steamboat on which Chief Crow King and the members of his surrendered band were brought.

Immediately upon Crow King's handing me the lariat by which he led the horse, he turned about and started on foot toward his camp, about four miles distant, leaving the horse and his daughter with me. I knew Indian character too well — and Crow King's in particular — to call him back to get his horse, as it would have been to him highly insulting. I knew immediately upon meeting him at the door that he had brought his daughter to be placed in school, and that he had given me his only horse to show his respect and good intentions; but having hitherto refrained from accepting a gift from an Indian under my charge, I was in a dilemma to know how to proceed in the premises.

I did not meet Crow King after this until some weeks had elapsed, but I learned in the meantime that he was working among his people to have them send their children to school, as he had sent his daughter, and his efforts produced good results.

Determining to "play Indian" on Crow King as he had manifested his friendship for me, and learning, upon inquiry, that a man named Zahn, living on the Cannon Ball River, about twenty-five miles north of Standing Rock agency, had a four-year old mare and colt for sale, I drove up to his ranch and purchased them. The mare was an excellent animal, very gentle, and the colt was an exceptionally good one.

This was about four weeks after Crow King had presented me with his only horse. I started for the Indian camp late in the evening, leading the mare behind my vehicle, with the colt following, timing my drive so as to reach the village shortly after sundown, when most of the Indians would be in their tepees. Indians in those days invariably had a stake driven in the ground near the door of their tepees, so that mounted visitors might tie their horses securely when calling. Crow King's lodge stood at the extreme southwestern corner of the camp, close to the main traveled wagon-road. I drove as noiselessly as possible through the Indian village, and as we were passing his lodge, Philip Wells, whom I had taken with me for that purpose, jumped from the wagon without stopping our team, and quickly fastening the rope, by which the mare was led, to the hitching-stake, we proceeded along the main road for a short distance further, then made a detour to avoid passing through the camp in returning to the agency. As a matter of course Crow King knew by whom the mare tied to the door of the lodge was given, but he never mentioned to me the horse he had given me, nor the mare and colt with which I had "played Indian" upon him.

One afternoon in the summer of 1883 I started by team to visit the camp of the late hostiles, and met Mrs. Crow King on the road, on her way to the agency, to see me, in order to obtain permission for her daughter at the school to visit her father, who, she said, was very ill and could not live many hours. I wrote her a note to take to the principal of the school, permitting the girl to visit her home, and I proceeded directly to Crow King's lodge. He received me calmly, told me he was ready to die and was glad I had come to see him. I found him suffering from pneumonia and in a hopeless state from the Indian point of view, but by no means hopeless if properly cared for. He was painted for death, as was customary among the Indians of that period, and nearly every Indian of the village was gathered around his lodge, ready to seize upon all property he was possessed of as soon as he ceased breathing, such also having then been the custom of the Sioux.

I dispatched a courier for the agency physician, also directed that a spring wagon be sent at once, supplied with mattress and blankets; and knowing Crow King's lack of faith in medicine men, I remained in his lodge to reason with him and obtain his consent, before the wagon arrived, to place himself in my hands for treatment. He would have no medicine man, and I feared that his hatred for the tribe would easily include the agency physician. I told him I wanted to take him to the agency and thought he could be cured.

"Medicine is a lie; all medicine men are liars," said Crow King.

I assured him that medicine was not necessary in his case; that what he needed, apart from a little stimulant, was a comfortable bed with proper food and attention, and he consented, rather to my astonishment, to go with me. We loaded him into the wagon and drove him to the agency, and put him in a spacious, well-ventilated room, which had but recently been fitted up for a dispensary. I permitted his wife, brother, and sister to remain in the room with him, and kept all other Indians away from the building by stationing an Indian police guard around it.

I had taken rather a desperate chance. If Crow King died, the Indians would be lost to faith in my "medicine," but if he lived I might be certain of the event having a great influence. I detailed three reliable employees, who took turns in carrying out the doctor's instructions in caring for Crow King; and both the doctor and myself gave him such attention as few sick Indians ever had before. The second day of the treatment he consented to have the death-paint removed from his face. In ten days he walked home. Before leaving, he tried to thank me for what had been done for him, but his feelings were too strong for utterance.

Soon after this Crow King went out over the reservation to show himself to his people after his recovery, and to the day of his death, when he committed to my care another child, was a strong advocate for the "medicine" of the white man.

CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT BUFFALO HUNT AT STANDING ROCK

Story of the Killing of Five Thousand Buffaloes by a Hunting Party of Six Hundred Mounted Sioux in the Summer of 1882.

PTE, the Buffalo, was feeding on the rich grasslands at the west end of the Great Sioux reservation, under the jurisdiction of the Standing Rock agency. The Indians at the agency knew it; they knew it instinctively, though it had been many years since the buffalo had sought the hunting-grounds of that part of the reservation. They believed that Pte, finding himself near to extinction at the hands of white pot-hunters, sought out the reservation that he might, in the end, fulfill his mission and die to provide walls for the tepee, robes for the couch, sinews for the bow, and meat for the store of the sons of the Lakodia. For Pte carried within his hairy cover the furnishing for all the primitive needs of his brother the Sioux. On the wings of the wind, then, came the news that Pte had arrived to make a Sioux holiday and provide such meat as had never been furnished, even by the most conscientious and liberal of beef-contractors. With this rich store of succulent meat in sight, giving assurance of a summer of good cheer, with such sport as must have appealed mightily to the heart of the hunter, it was not possible that the Indians could be held in check. I therefore took the initiative and proposed to the head men that a great buffalo-hunt should be organized. I have been measurably successful in dealing with the Indian because I have treated him as a man, but I am firmly convinced that the organization of the hunt at that time, and under the existing conditions, did more than anything else in bringing about a good understanding with the people whom I lived with and guided for so many years.

When I took charge of the Indians on the Standing Rock reservation, they were a sullen lot, and suspicious of every move made by the government or its administrative officers. On the day that I arrived at the agency to assume charge, September 8, 1881, Sitting Bull and one hundred and forty-six of the more turbulent of his followers were taken down the Missouri River to be held prisoners at Fort Randall. The circumstances were not auspicious. I moved my family and household goods down the Missouri, from Bismarck to Fort Yates, the military post adjoining the agency on the south, making the trip on the steamer General Sherman. As the steamer approached the Fort Yates landing I saw a prospect that was not calculated to inspire hope in the breast of a man who had accepted the appointment with the sincere determination of turning a lot of wild Indians into civilized human beings by moral suasion and firm guidance, divorced altogether from the suggestion of coercion.

On the bench of the river-bank stood the tepees of Sitting Bull and his band. A cordon of troops hemmed in the encampment. All around this bench, where stood the camp of the most vicious and bitter of the Hunkpapa Sioux, there was and is an amphitheatre of hills, and on these hills lay the people of the reservation. The showing of force was sufficient to quell any disposition on the part of the Indians to interfere with the removal of Sitting Bull and his band, even if they had been so disposed, which they were not. The more intelligent of the Sioux had long since considered Sitting Bull a boastful pretender, that as a leader he was a fraud; and his power in the Sioux nation was gone when he was deserted by Gall, Crow King, and other of the trusted chiefs. A few hours after my arrival, Sitting Bull, with his one hundred and forty-six immediate followers, was taken down the Missouri River to Fort Randall, and I was left to deal with nearly six thousand Indians, over half of whom had been out with Sitting Bull in active hostility for several years, and who, from the disappearance of buffalo in the section of country to which they had fled after the campaign of 1876, were compelled to return and surrender to the United States military authorities at various frontier posts, the garrisons of which had been constantly harassing them after the battle of the Little Big Horn.

On the Standing Rock reservation, and principally huddled about the agency — which was located then, as now, sixty miles south of Bismarck, North Dakota, on the west bank of the Missouri River — there were Hunkpapas, Yanktonais, Blackfeet, Minniconjous, Sans Arcs, Oglalas, Brules, and some minor bands: a miscellaneous crew, many of them fresh from a life of vagabondage, and not a few as hostile at heart as any Indians ever were. It was not promising material, and it was very raw, but I was far from hopeless of doing something with it.

It was in the following spring, after a hard winter, that I was inspired to take the people on a buffalo hunt that would at once show my faith in them and give them the healthful exercise and natural food they were pining for.

I was on excellent terms with those of the leaders who had intelligence enough to appreciate the fact that the white man's way must be made the path of the Indian. The most trustworthy of these men I had appointed policemen. The chiefs of dignity and importance, who had shown a good disposition, were treated with consideration. I reckoned among my friends such men as Gall and Crow King, both of whom had been lieutenants of Sitting Bull, and had accompanied him in his flight after the Custer affair; Rain-in-the-Face and John Grass, the latter a distinguished orator and influential man, Fire Heart, Kill Eagle, Crazy Walking, — now judge of the court of Indian offenses at Standing Rock agency, — Spotted Horn Bull, Gray Eagle, Charging Thunder, and many others who were not chiefs originally but who were advanced as I found them influential and intelligent. Through these men I made known my desire that the people might organize a hunt.

The bands were all camped about the agency, and for several days previous to that upon which the expedition was to move, June 10, there was such excitement as had not been seen for many moons. Men, women, and children were engaged in the preparation. Arms were brought out and cleaned; ammunition was provided, and this was a most important matter. I had been engaged in quietly disarming the people, and it was impossible for any of them to obtain cartridges except on my order. These orders were made in favor of individuals and for a limited number of cartridges, but it was desirable that they should not receive the impression that I was fearful of their obtaining too great a supply.

The ponies that had been having a hard time during the winter were given such careful attention as must have surprised them. The finest clothing and decorations were brought out, and the women vied with one another in embellishing the personal outfits of the hunters of their families. It would hardly be possible to make a more glittering array of a body of Indians, and the plains of Dakota had not for many years seen so resplendent a gathering of these people as that which moved out of Standing Rock just after dawn on the tenth of June, 1882. And it was many hours later before the last of the straggling column disappeared from view over the buttes to the west of the agency.

The buffalo had been located one hundred miles to the west, in a country now beyond the limits of the reservation, but which was at that time within the boundary. The great body of the people would move slowly, and it was arranged that the Indians should have a few days the start of myself and the little party who were to accompany me. On the morning of June 15 I left the agency. With me was my son, Harry, then a lad of fourteen, who distinguished himself on the hunt by killing seven buffalo calves, Steve Burk, James Stitsell, Thomas Miller, and John Eagle Man, the latter an Indian policeman. Our supply-wagon had been sent on ahead. We overtook the main body of Indians that evening at Cedar Creek, fifty miles west of the agency, where a camp was made and the important business of selecting and starting off the scouts to locate the herd was gone through with.

The camp was made according to the tribal custom, and all the honors were accorded traditional belief. In the slovenly Indian of the agency there is little to suggest that he and his people do all things by system, that he and they are the creatures of custom; but, in fact, the Sioux has the most solemn regard for the usages of his people. He is given to ceremonial wherever it is possible, and he is unprogressive, according to our light, because he will not undertake to do those things for which custom has prescribed no system. The buffalo hunt was unquestionably the most important business of the year to the Sioux, and in going into the hunt an elaborate ceremonial, some portions of it based on good sense and much of it on the outgrowth of arbitrary custom, was indulged in by them.

When I overtook the Indians at Cedar Creek (the south fork of the Cannon Ball River) the camp was pitched close to where the Bismarck and Black Hills trail crosses that stream. An opening had been left in the circle of lodges and I was conducted through this. The camp was practically deserted, but for a few old men and women. The Indians had gathered in a great body some distance to the west of the camp, and to this gathering-place I made my way. I may say that, although I had spent ten years with the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands, I knew little of the customs of the Teton bands, and the ceremonial of a buffalo hunt was new to me.

The two thousand Indians were seated on the prairie, forming a crescent-shaped body, the horns of the crescent opening to the west. At the south horn of the crescent were seated the important men in the hunt organization, Running Antelope, the leader of the hunt and an orator of prominence, at the extreme end; next to him Long Soldier, and then Red Horse, who divided with Running Antelope the direction of the party. Around the crescent the people were seated with due regard for rank from the place of honor, the men in the front rows. Across the horns of the crescent, the opening would measure a hundred yards. Before the place occupied by Running Antelope there was set up a painted stone, some ten inches high, answering the purpose of an altar, and as I approached, there gathered about the altar eight young men who had been selected as scouts to go ahead and spy out the buffalo. At their head was Crazy Walking, and all had been carefully chosen, not only for their qualities as hunters, but because they were known to be truthful and of good moral character. They were as fine a body of young men as could be found in the Sioux nation, and many of them came to be men of prominence, Crazy Walking being now, as I have said, an Indian judge at Standing Rock agency.

The scouts being seated, Running Antelope harangued them on the importance of their mission and how necessary it was that their work should be carefully done and correctly reported. He pointed to the importance of the undertaking, the necessity for caution, and closed by administering to each of them an oath binding them to report correctly what they saw in the hunting country. The oath was administered amid breathless silence, the men in the semicircle even putting away their pipes while Running Antelope filled the sacred pipe. This he did with much deliberation, then, taking a spoon-shaped wooden utensil used only on ceremonial occasions, he drew a coal from the fire, placed it on the tobacco, offered the pipe to the earth in front of him, to propitiate the spirits which make the ground fruitful, then to the sky, invoking the blessing of the Great Spirit. Taking a pull from the pipe, with the peculiar hissing sound of the Indian smoker, he passed it to Crazy Walking, who placed his hand, holding the bowl of the pipe, on the painted stone and drew one puff of smoke, and so passed it down the line, each scout repeating the performance. I was hardly prepared for the change that came over the multitude when the ceremony was concluded. Instantly every man owning a horse was on his feet, shouting and gesticulating and congratulating the scouts on their good fortune, and the horses were brought up. John Eagle Man, my policeman, explained to me that the scouts must now be escorted forth from the circle and taken some distance on their way, then the escort must race back and ride into and between the horns of the crescent, following a line upon which three freshly cut green bushes had been set up, about ten yards apart, and within a few feet of the front rank of the Indians. If, in passing the bushes, the leader of the race should fail to knock any of these bushes down, the hunt might as well be abandoned; should he knock one down, it would augur but indifferent success; if two were knocked over, the chase would be fairly successful, and if, by a happy chance, the rider should upset all three of the bushes, then there would be a great amount of game killed and the people would be rich beyond the telling.

My knowledge of the Indian had already taught me that nothing impresses him so much as having the reputation of being lucky or bringing good luck. I had an excellent horse, a present from Crow King, as narrated in chapter six. For several weeks the animal had been fed with grain and well exercised, and I could depend on his speed. I made up my mind then that I would try for the reputation of having good medicine as a prophet by knocking down the bushes.

A howling, shouting, joyous mob of about three hundred mounted men started out with the scouts. It takes an occasion of this sort to induce the Sioux to throw off his affected indifference and his borrowed reputation for stoicism. As a matter of fact, my experience among the Indians has taught me that when they are happy they are exuberant and noisy in their demonstrations of joy, and the band that went forth that evening, singing and careering about on their horses, were as light-hearted a lot of men as I ever saw anywhere. They dashed recklessly about the scouts, touching them with lucky charms, shouting out encouragement and advice, and joking them on their love-affairs. For about two miles the escort continued with the scouts; then a whoop rang out that was taken up by some hundreds of mounted men, and screaming a good-by to the scouting party, the escort wheeled and dashed back toward the camp. I was hardly ready for the beginning of the race, but recovered soon enough to be well up with the leaders. I had something of an advantage over the Indians by having observed the lay of the land very closely while going out, and that a slight deviation from the direct course in returning to camp would avoid some rough ground and stony ridges, which would greatly tax a horse running at topmost speed. Furthermore, my horse had not been worn out in the display of horsemanship incident to the outgoing journey indulged in by the Indians, and I made up my mind to save him for a fast finish.

The details of that mad race in the midst of a swarm of whooping Indians do not remain very fresh in my memory. I only know that, as I drew up to the horns of the crescent, there was only one Indian within several yards of me, both of us headed straight for the bushes that bore the tale of the prophecy. I managed to nose my Indian out at the finish, and rode pellmell along the front of the crescent-shaped column of men and women, who retained their places, to witness the finish and rejoice according to augury. They moved not an inch, and I swerved my horse in the nick of time, went straight at the bushes, and rode down all three of them.

The tremendous row that followed this performance I was prepared for, after witnessing the other demonstration, but I had had no idea of the importance that would be attached to the feat. By the time they were through with me, I understood that I had good medicine and had established myself in the esteem of the Indians of Standing Rock agency.

The next morning we took the trail after the scouts. The direction was due west, and we went forward in most orderly formation, Running Antelope and the other leaders prescribing rules which none might break. One hundred men were selected and designated as soldiers, their faces being painted to indicate their office, and their business being to preserve order on the march. My son Harry, being well mounted, was made a soldier.

At the head of the column marched twelve men whose office it was to make the pace. They walked slowly and with much deliberation, the object being to restrain the better-mounted or more impetuous, and the gait of the pacemaker was equal to that of the slowest old man in the party. Every three miles or thereabouts the pacemakers halted and sat down for a smoke and rest, and during these periods of rest the old men and great hunters told stories of their prowess in the hunting field.

The main body marched in two columns, a few hundred yards apart, the Hunkpapas and Blackfeet to the left and the Yanktonais to the right. I traveled with the Hunkpapas until the hunt really began, when the Yanktonais made a row about it and declared their right to enjoy the benefit of traveling in company with the good medicine that I possessed, and I went over to the other column. We made no more than ten miles a day, and the march was wearisome enough, but it was relieved at night by the feasting, dancing, and story-telling in the camps. The greatest orators and chief warriors of the Sioux nation were in the party with us: Gall, whom I have always regarded as one of the most intelligent men of his race, a great orator and natural leader; John Grass, a man who became a great power with his people; Crow King, Rain-in-the-Face, Spotted Horn Bull, and other men of the Hunkpapas, whose names were household words in the days when the Sioux had still the pernicious idea that they were the equals of the white man in the field. In such company — the said company having the material for feast and smoking — there was no lack of entertainment at night, and I frequently had to tell the people that I was sleepy in order to have them leave, that I might retire for the night.

The trail led through what was then and is still the finest grazing country on this continent. It is not a plains country, except in the sense that it bears little timber, but is diversified by draws and small hills, with here and there a row of majestic buttes relieving the line of the horizon. Water-courses were sufficiently numerous to provide for the stock, and the ponies were in good condition.

The march lasted four days, and by the end of the fourth day we were beyond the present boundary of the Standing Rock reservation. At that time the boundary on the west was the 103d degree of west longitude, but one degree was cut off by the agreement of 1889. In the forenoon of the fourth day the advance-guard made out the scouts. They were cut out against the sky-line some ten miles away, and even at that distance our people read their signals. The signals were made out before the men were visible to the eye, in fact, for each of the scouts carried a little circular mirror and signaled his message by a comparatively perfect heliographic system, which was read by our people and repeated.

A great herd of buffalo was grazing within a few miles of the scouts. Camp was made that night to the leeward, and within striking distance of the hunting-ground, due provision being made that the grazing herd should not be disturbed. When I arose next morning the camp was the scene of much excited activity. A half-dozen grindstones had been carried along, and a clamoring mob stood about each grindstone, waiting for a turn at the knife-sharpening, which could not have been attempted before without interfering with the good medicine. While they were sharpening their knives, Shave Head, an Indian policeman, announced to the people that "The Father" wanted a live buffalo calf. Camp was broken, to the end that it might be moved up closer to the scene of slaughter that was to ensue, and the hunters mounted. I could not see that there was any general supervision of the hunt after the game came in sight, but the traditional rules of the Sioux in buffalo-hunting were rigidly adhered to.

There were about six hundred mounted hunters in the party, and they rode in two broad columns where it was possible, but using the draws and ravines to shelter them and prevent the game from taking fright and stampeding before the Indians were amongst the bison. I was well up in front of my party when we came out on an elevation within a few hundred yards of the nearest buffalo.

It was the knowledge of what would take place when that band of buffalo-hungry Indians swooped down into the valley, presently, that made the scene that presented itself intensely interesting. So far as the eye could gather, the picture was pastoral, with many thousands of cattle quietly grazing on the slopes of a hundred elevations. The knowledge that the moving animals in the pastoral scene were buffalo, the greatest game in the world, contributed to the element of personal excitement; but for the rest, I saw just such a picture a few months ago in crossing the country to the east of that hunting-ground, where the cattle of the "L7" outfit range. The buffalo had shed their hair and looked like a vast herd of black cattle.

The slayers halted before rushing on their prey. They were no longer agency Indians. Every man of the lot had discarded every superfluity in the way of clothing and was simply and effectively garbed in a breech-cloth. Most of them carried repeating rifles and all had breech-loaders, except a few of the older men and the boys, whose poverty forced them to use, if not to be content with, the bow and arrow. And every man had a hunting-knife.

There was no shouting as the race for the herd began, and we were among the buffalo, a column attacking eack flank, before they knew it. A few of the animals looked up and sniffed, some scampered to a distance, but there was no stampede. In fact, so widely were they scattered and so immense was the herd — estimated at fifty thousand —that a stampede would not have been possible. As the first rifle cracked, a few of the animals began to run, but the hunters followed them, and the hunt became a slaughter in less time than I have taken to tell it.

Of the details of the killing but few incidents remain with me. A hunter would ride up close to his quarry, take as careful aim as possible, and generally get his meat with a single shot. A tough old bull or a particularly active two-year-old might give him trouble; but so far as I could see — and I was somewhat busy myself — the hunter shot, gave the struggling animal the *coup de grâce*, and went on for another shot. As I came out of Hidden Wood Creek just previous to the charge, Crow's Ghost rode up and advised me not to charge with the first column, and John Eagle Man, whom I had hitherto seen only in the sedate habiliments of an Indian policeman, but who now sported a breech-clout and wore a red handkerchief bound about his temples, tendered the same advice. I had some difficulty in keeping my party in check, and my son, Harry, was particularly keen for the game; but we got into the hunt with some show of order.

There was no rest during the day. The Indians killed until they were dismounted or exhausted — not a few of them were dismounted.

Late in the afternoon I found an old fellow unconscious, whose horse had fallen with him, another whose horse had been disemboweled and who had had his own leg ripped from the ankle to the knee by an enraged buffalo, another with a badly lacerated hand, with three fingers blown off by the bursting of his gun. The hunters had paid absolutely no attention to those injured men; even their relatives, who would ordinarily make a great row if they were ill, had passed them by unnoticed, and they had lain for hours in the sun, bleeding to death. We bound up their wounds, made them shelters from the sun, and left them as comfortable as possible until we found their relatives and had them taken to camp.

There were some amusing incidents. Wolf Necklace, an old man about sixty years of age, handicapped by poverty and the fact that a paternal government did not think he needed a gun, was constrained to use the bow and arrow. I found him ambling along on a gray pony within easy range of an old buffalo into which he had shot a number of arrows without bringing the animal to the ground. Somebody offered to kill the buffalo. "No," said the Indian, "the arrows will work in and he'll die." And the old fellow calmly rode on, shooting an occasional arrow into the bull until he dropped.

Another Indian, one Peter Skunk, had shot and wounded a big bull with a revolver and had been dismounted. Fortunately he landed close beside a large boulder in a little depression in the prairie. He put the boulder between himself and the bull with what expedition he could muster, and there we found him, the bull chasing him about the rock and giving him no time for a shot. We offered to make the killing for him, but he screamed an enraged "No!" For about five minutes the Indian dodged the bull, until the animal became tired. When he paused for a minute, Skunk took advantage of the pause and planted a shot behind the ear that stopped the animal.

I have known but few Indians die of heart-disease, but in the midst of the hunt one met death from that cause. We found a man crouching behind a rock; he had dismounted and his horse was grazing near by, the rope trailing. The hunter had dismounted to pick off his game with greater certainty; his gun rested on the rock, it was cocked, and a finger was on the trigger; in the very act of shooting, death smote him instantaneously.

For myself I had good luck. The advice of Eagle Man was too good to be disregarded. Moreover, that faithful ally was by my side, determined that I should not get hurt in getting my first buffalo. The column with which I was riding was to attack the herd on the left flank, the other column on the other flank, the two columns being about five miles apart when the charge was made; and the herd was to be driven together for the slaughter, escape being possible only to the west, as we attacked from the northeast and southeast. After the first few scattering shots there was a tremendous din all over the field, and the wildness of some of the shooting made me thankful that I was not in the mêlée; and I had my reward. A little bunch of buffalo dropped behind the herd and directly in front of us. We rode down on the animals, and I picked out a fine three-year-old cow and fired into her flank at close quarters. I knew that it was customary for the Indians to shoot a fleeing buffalo in the flank, trusting to the certainty that the bullet would work in and disable the animal. In this case I aimed a little high, the cow turned, and my pony, knowing more about buffalo-hunting than I did, promptly wheeled to keep out of her way. I came very near going out of the hunt that instant, for the sudden swerve of the pony almost unseated me and sent my Winchester flying twenty feet away. The cow turned at once to follow the herd, and I picked up my rifle and followed her; but before I could get another shot the animal again charged. I shot her between the eyes as she rushed at my mount, which only made her shake her head and wheel to follow the herd; but a well-directed shot behind the right fore-shoulder, as she turned to the left, settled the cow, and I had my first buffalo. I got four others and quit, in the knowledge that I had no means of taking care of more meat.

I had a good stiff ride back to camp that evening, for I had lost Harry and spent some time looking for him, and it was long after dark when the Indians got back to their camp. They were all too tired for story-telling that night, but an estimate was made of the number of buffalo killed, and it was proved correct the next day, when about two thousand carcasses were butchered, no attempt at butchering being made on the first day.

I slept long the next morning, and when I rose I found that the entire Indian encampment had been moved out close to the field of the hunt. My tent stood alone, but ranged about it, tied to stakes, were twenty-two buffalo calves, the Indians' response to my request for a single calf!

The men were at work skinning and cutting up the dead animals, when I arrived on the field, and that day was given up to this work; but the next day they followed the herd to the west, and resumed the slaughter, which was even more extensive that day than in the first hunt. The attack was made as before, for the buffalo had moved but a short distance. They were attacked on each side, and the men killed the choicer animals until they had all the meat that could be carried away and all the skins needed — the hides of the shedding season being useless for robes. The slaughter had been awful but not wanton, and I was impressed with the fact then that the Indian displays more restraint in hunting, even though his desire to kill makes his blood boil, than the white man. I never have known an Indian to kill a game animal that he did not require for his needs. And I have known few white hunters to stop while there was game to kill. The hunt stopped when five thousand buffalo had been slain.

The hunters removed the hump and other tender morsels from the carcasses, quartered the beeves for transport, and brought the meat in on wagons and travois to the camp, which had been made on Hidden Wood Creek, where there was plenty of good water, which camp remained there for the jerking of the meat and making of pemmican. The second day I lost my saddle-horse, a herd of four or five hundred buffalo stampeding directly through the camp and carrying off five horses, including mine, which were out grazing. The animal was not retaken then, remaining with the buffalo until the following fall, when a hunting party identified the beast, captured it after "creasing" it — shooting it through the skin at the top of the neck, just forward of the shoulder.

The night of the first butchering there was such a feast as had not been held at Standing Rock for many years. Mighty hunters sat down with mighty appetites to satisfy, and ate until I stood fairly astonished at the capacity of their stomachs for solid food. And they told stories of the hunt — stories that did not need corroboration.

Crazy Walking, whom in memory of that day I made a captain of police later, Standing Soldier, Henry Agard, and Frank Gates, the last two mixed bloods, had each killed twenty-six buffalo; Bull Head, who was killed eight years after in carrying out my order for the arrest of Sitting Bull, and who was captain of the soldiers in that hunt, had a mighty bag; Shave Head, who died with Bull Head and who had severely disciplined one of the party the night before the hunt for an alleged offense against the discipline of the soldiers (of which he was really innocent), Shave Head too had meat for many days; Black Bull — who sits listening, a grinning old man, as I tell this story — was among the heroes in performance that day. But if I would tell the tale of great hunters I must enumerate the head men of the Sioux Nation. They were all in that hunt and at peace on the banks of the Hidden Wood Creek that night. Years after, in the trying times of the ghost-dancing, when Sitting Bull sought to arouse his people against the whites, there was bitterness, enmity, and death; but that night Hunkpapas, Blackfeet, Upper and Lower Yanktonais, and whites were friends in feasting as they are friends to-day, and I never visit my old home at Standing Rock but that some of them gather at my door and go over the story of the great buffalo hunt of 1882.

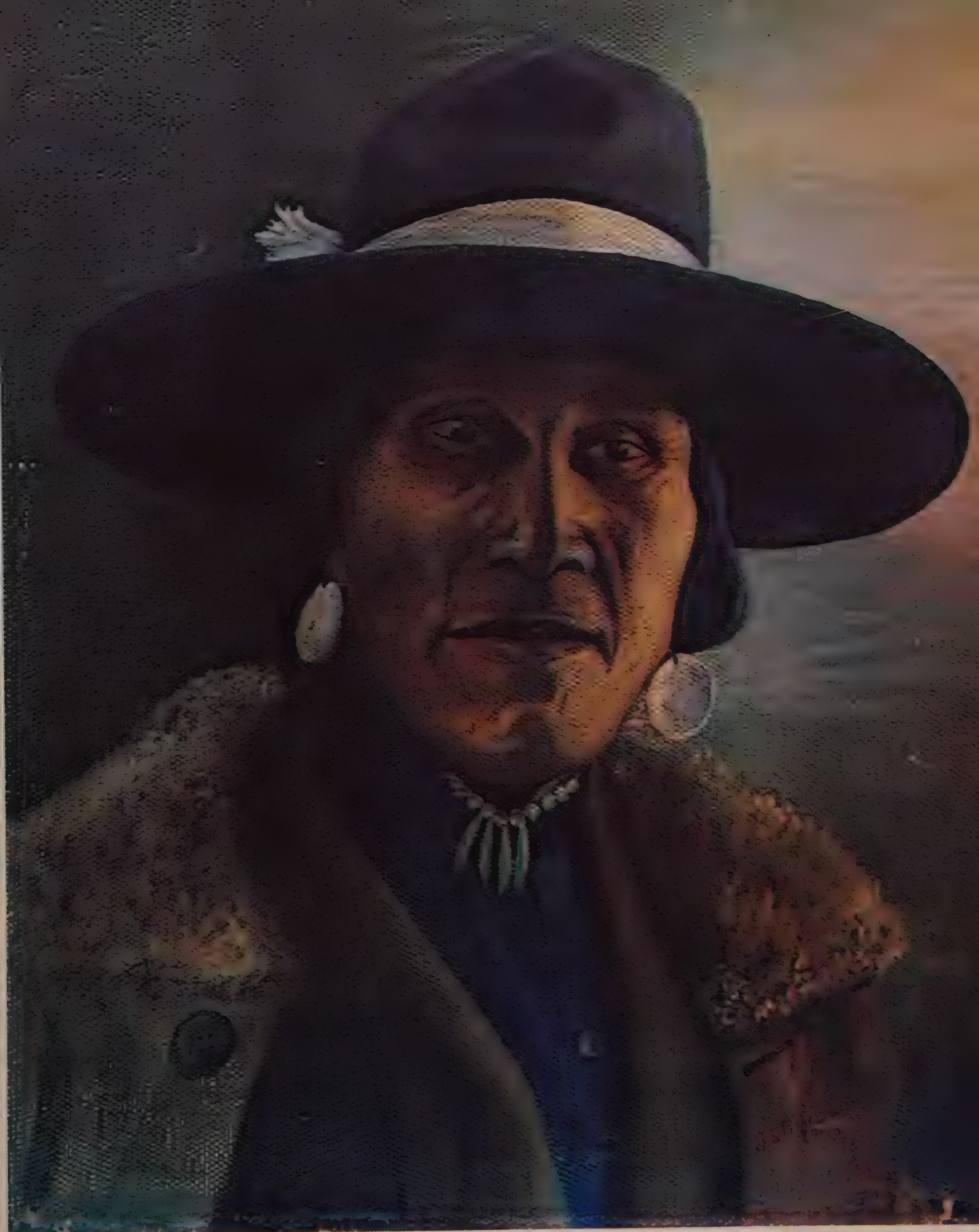
The Paintings of Daniel Shaw Buisson

FIRST PORTFOLIO

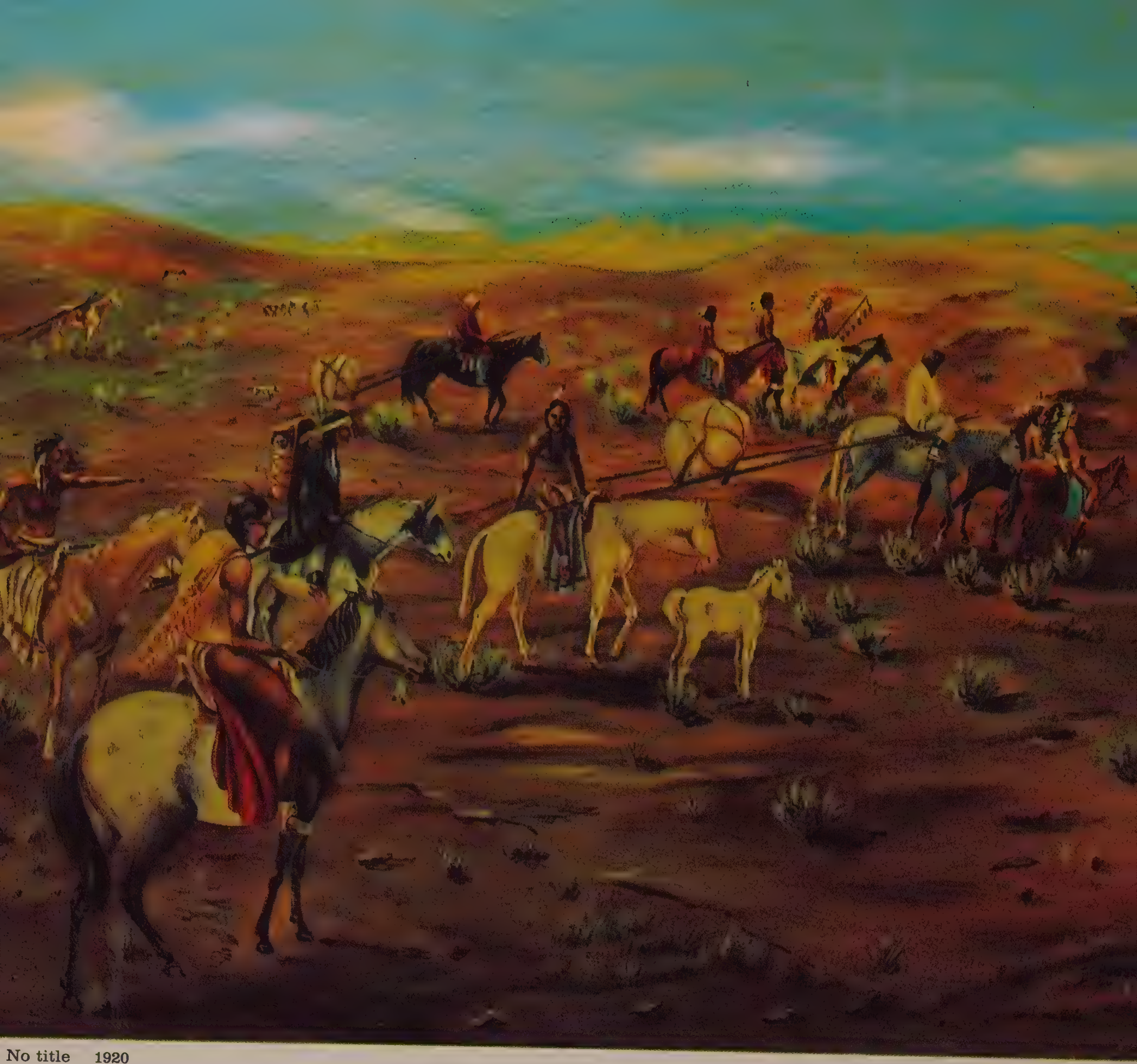
PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Where the painter had titled and dated his work the publisher has used them. Where one or the other was missing they are so indicated. In some, dates and titles were not entirely legible, a question mark so indicates.

The paintings in this first portfolio are dated and arranged in chronological order so that the reader may see Buisson's skill progress from year to year.



TWO GUNS WHITECALF (Blackfoot) 1925



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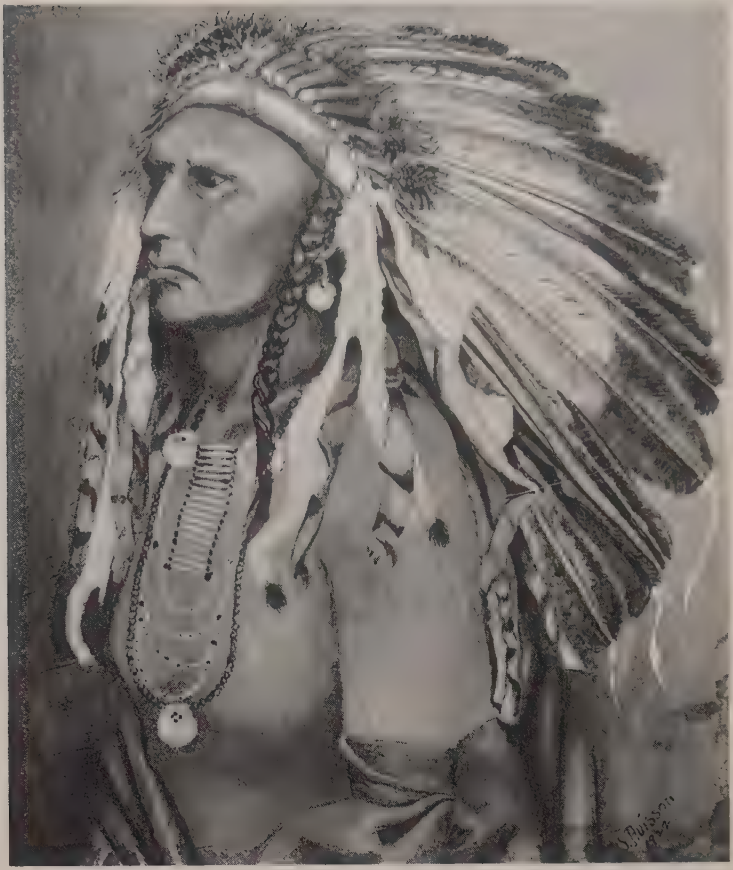
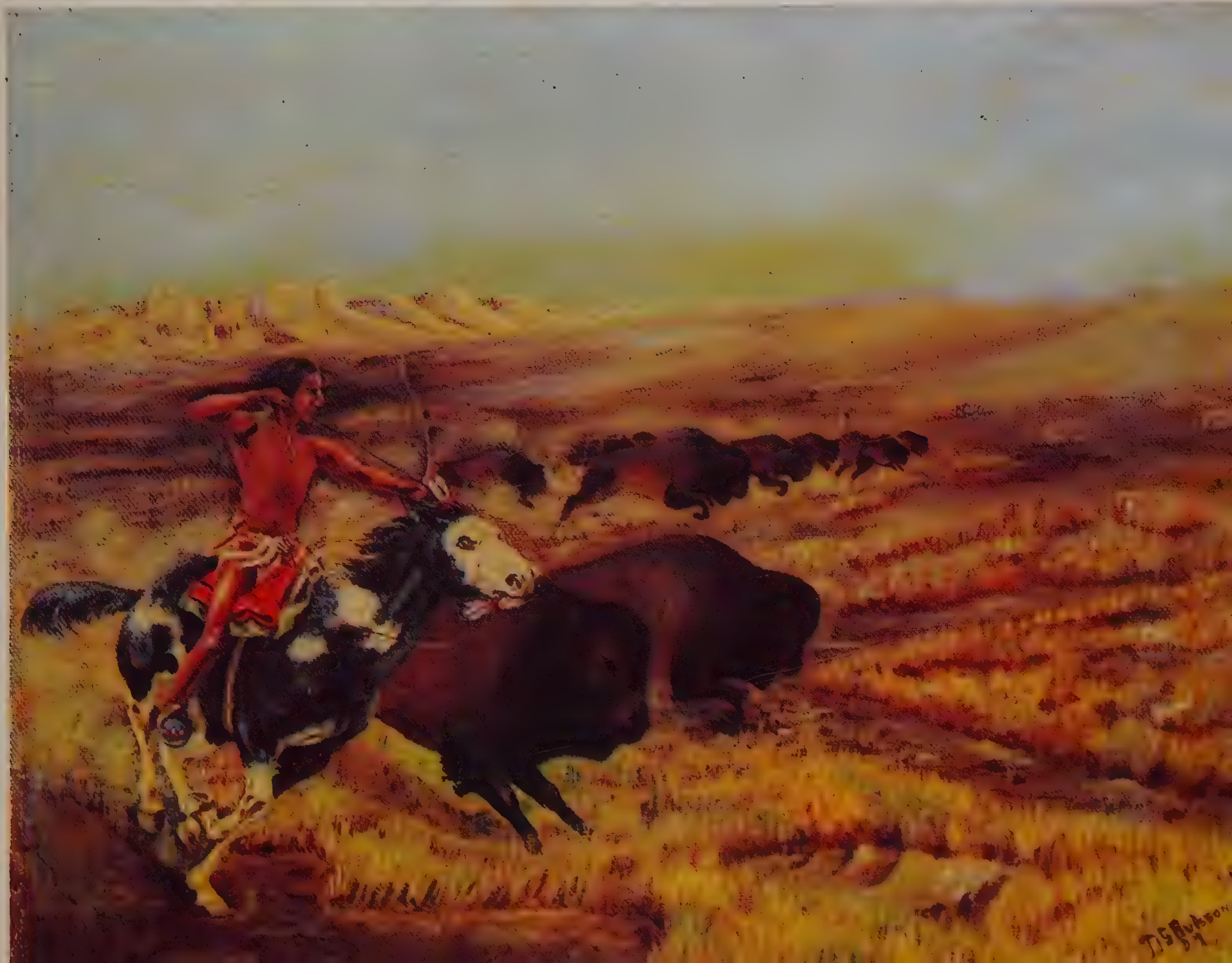
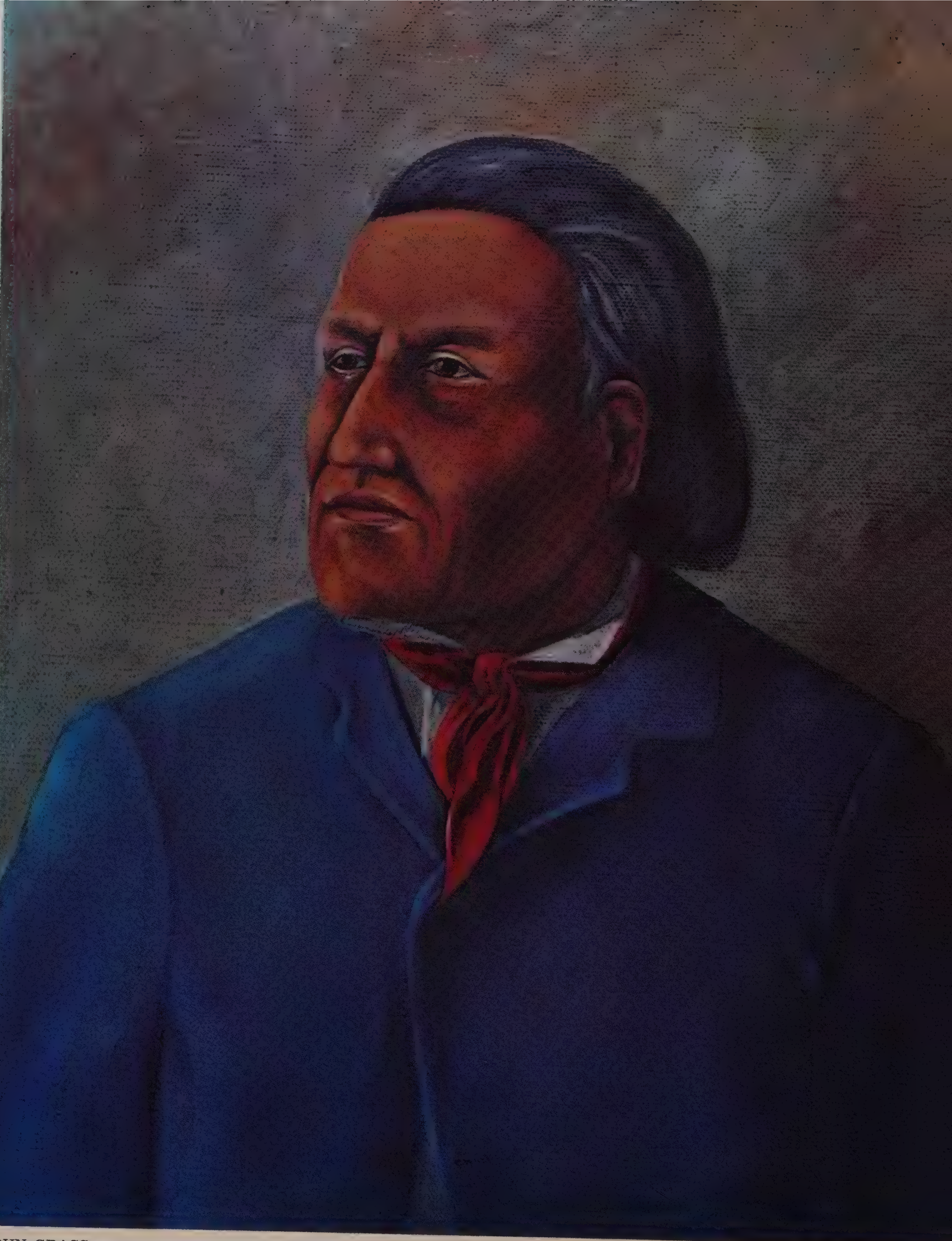


The earliest
Buisson Art
1922

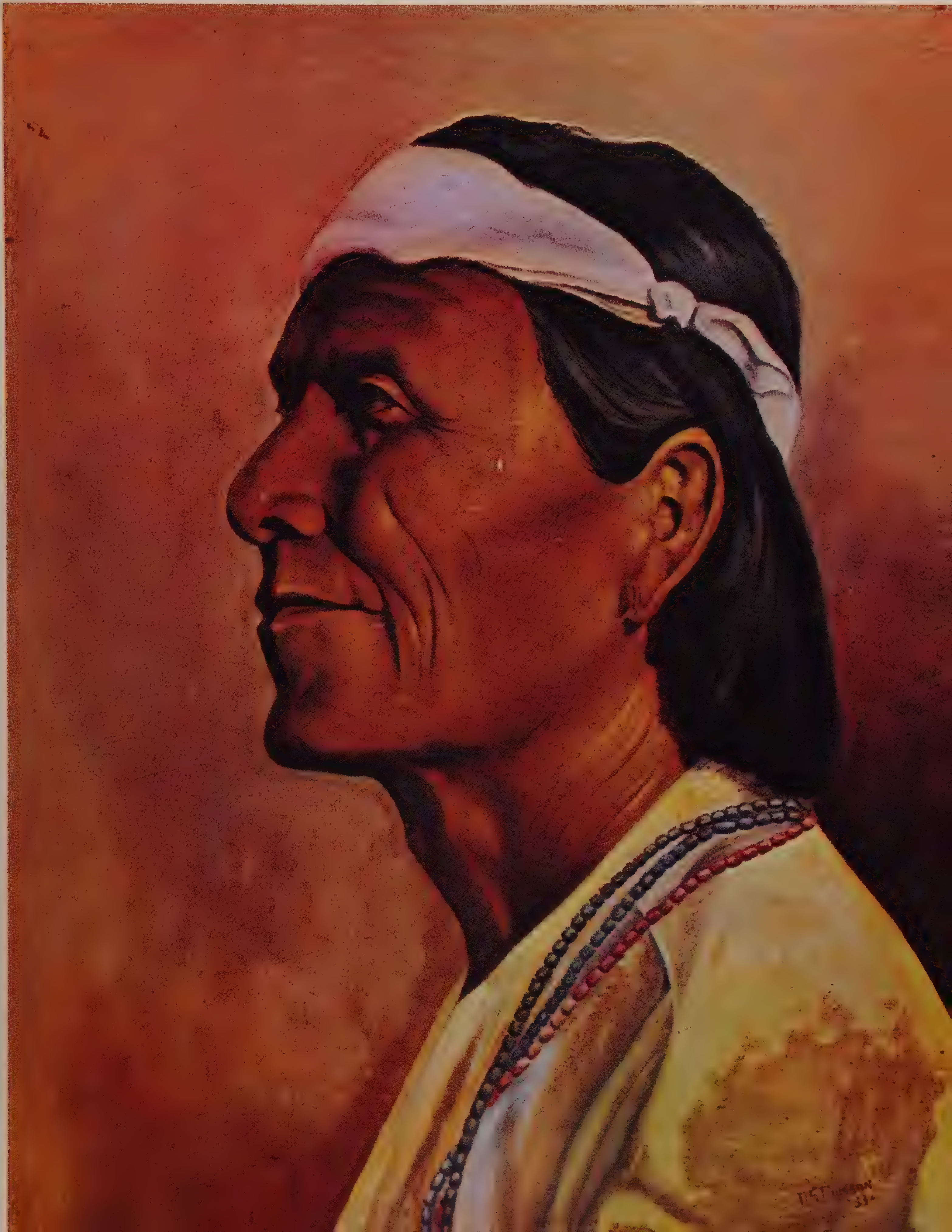
No title 1929





OHN GRASS 1927

The Interpreter (Teton Sioux) 1933



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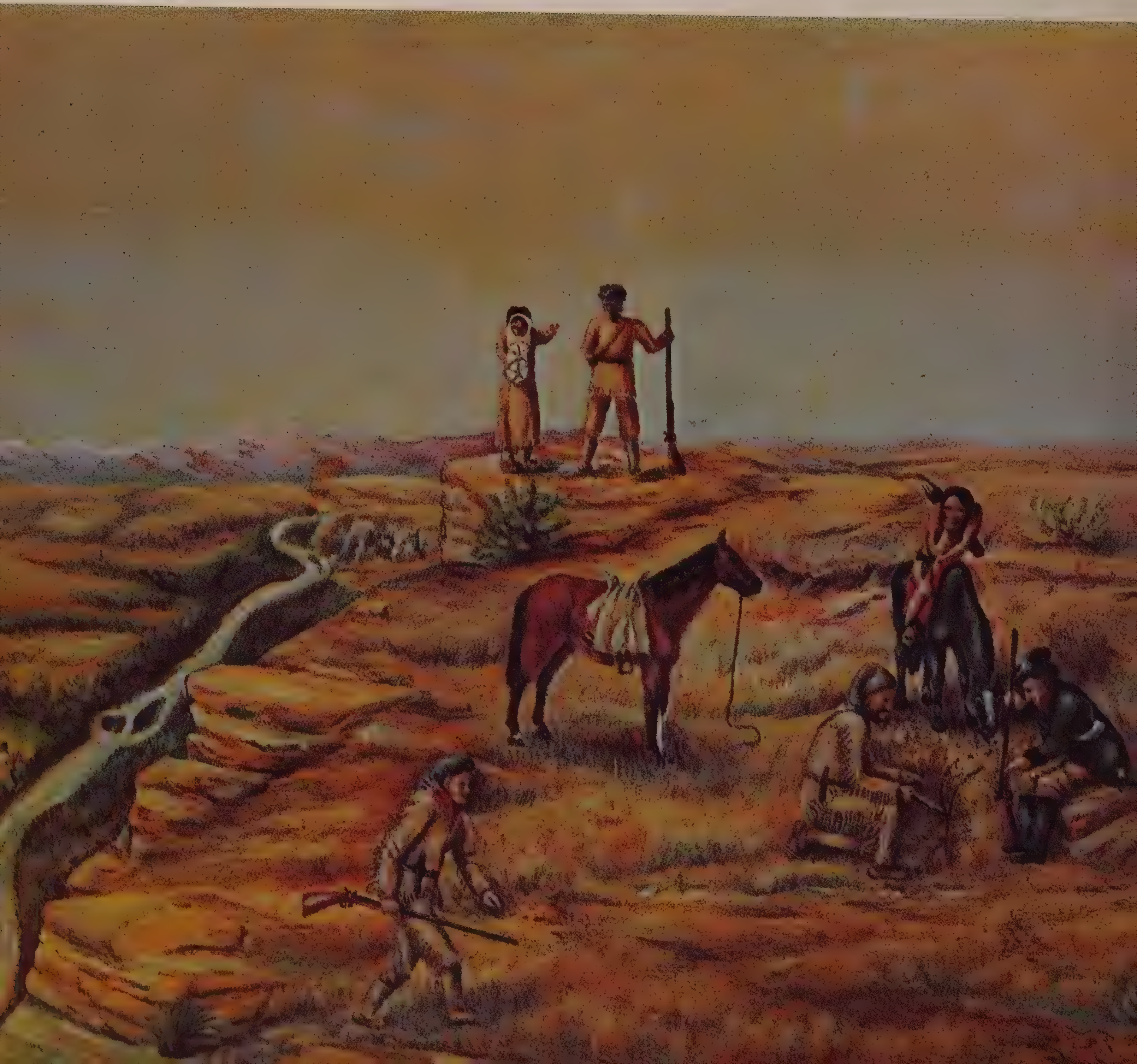
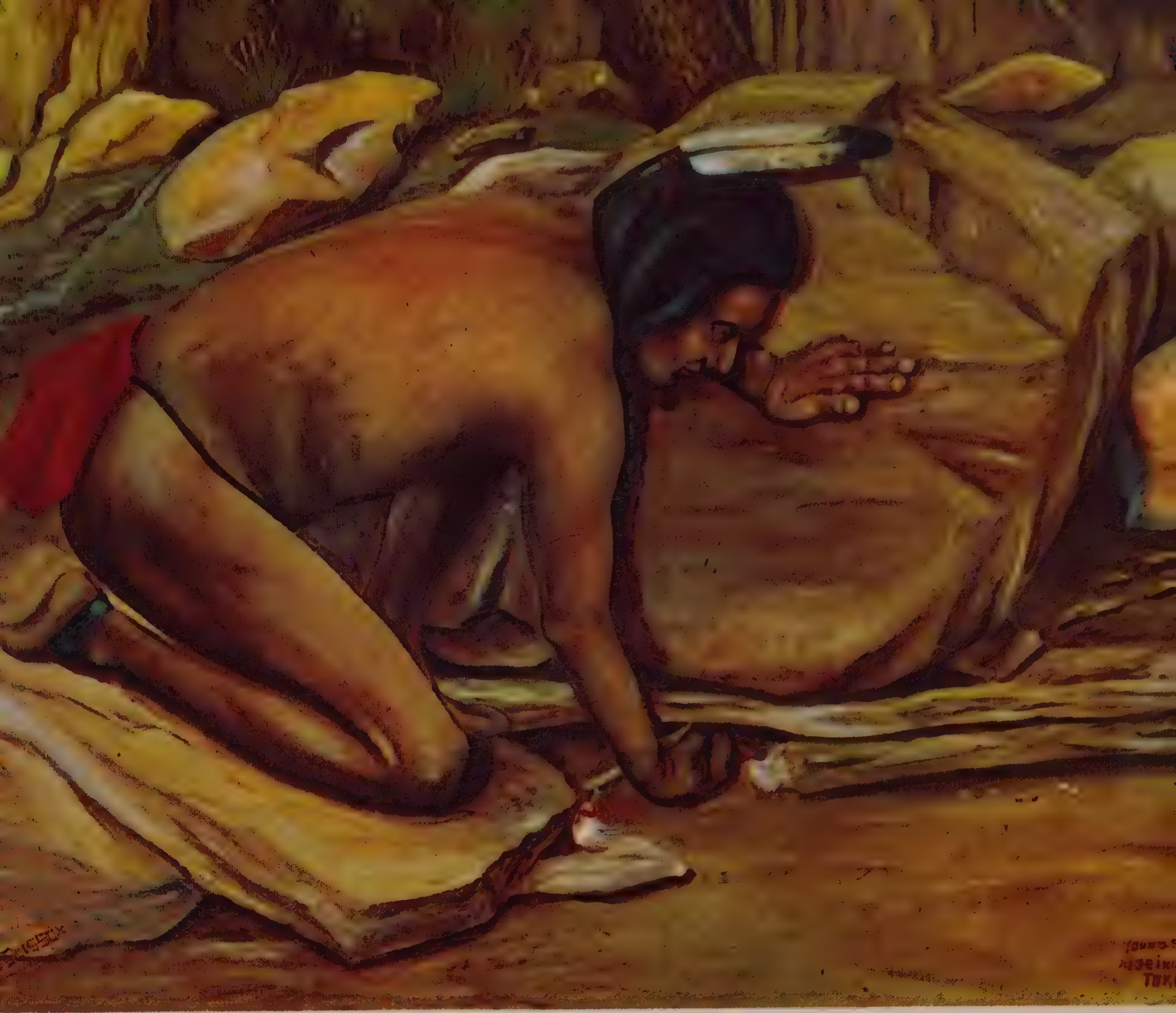
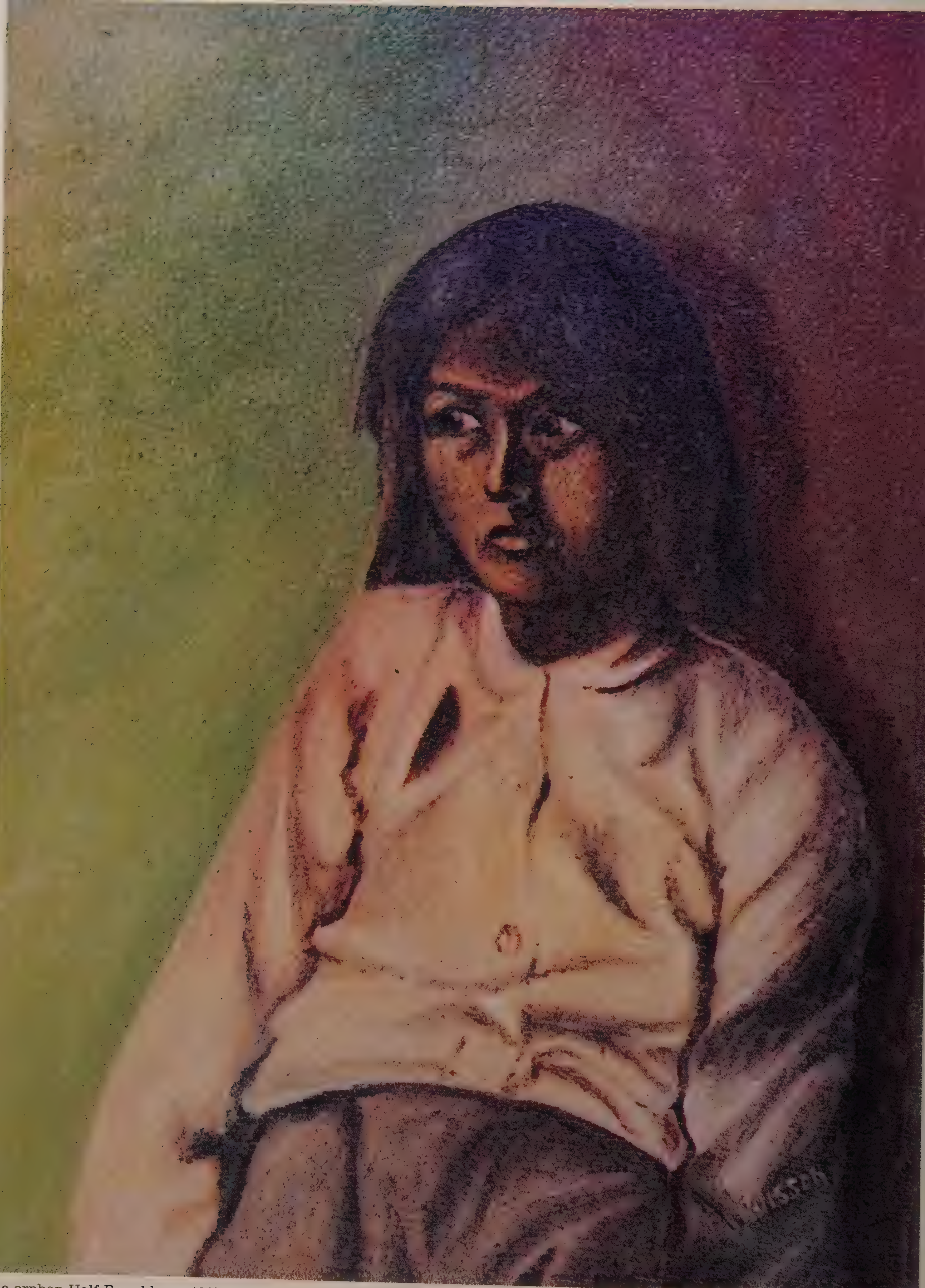
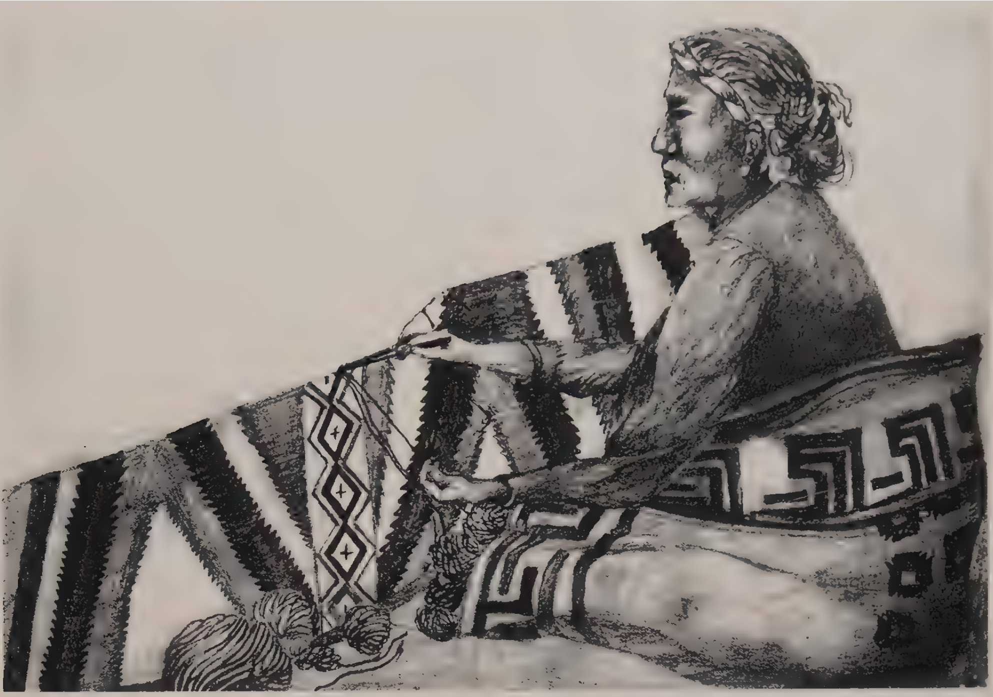




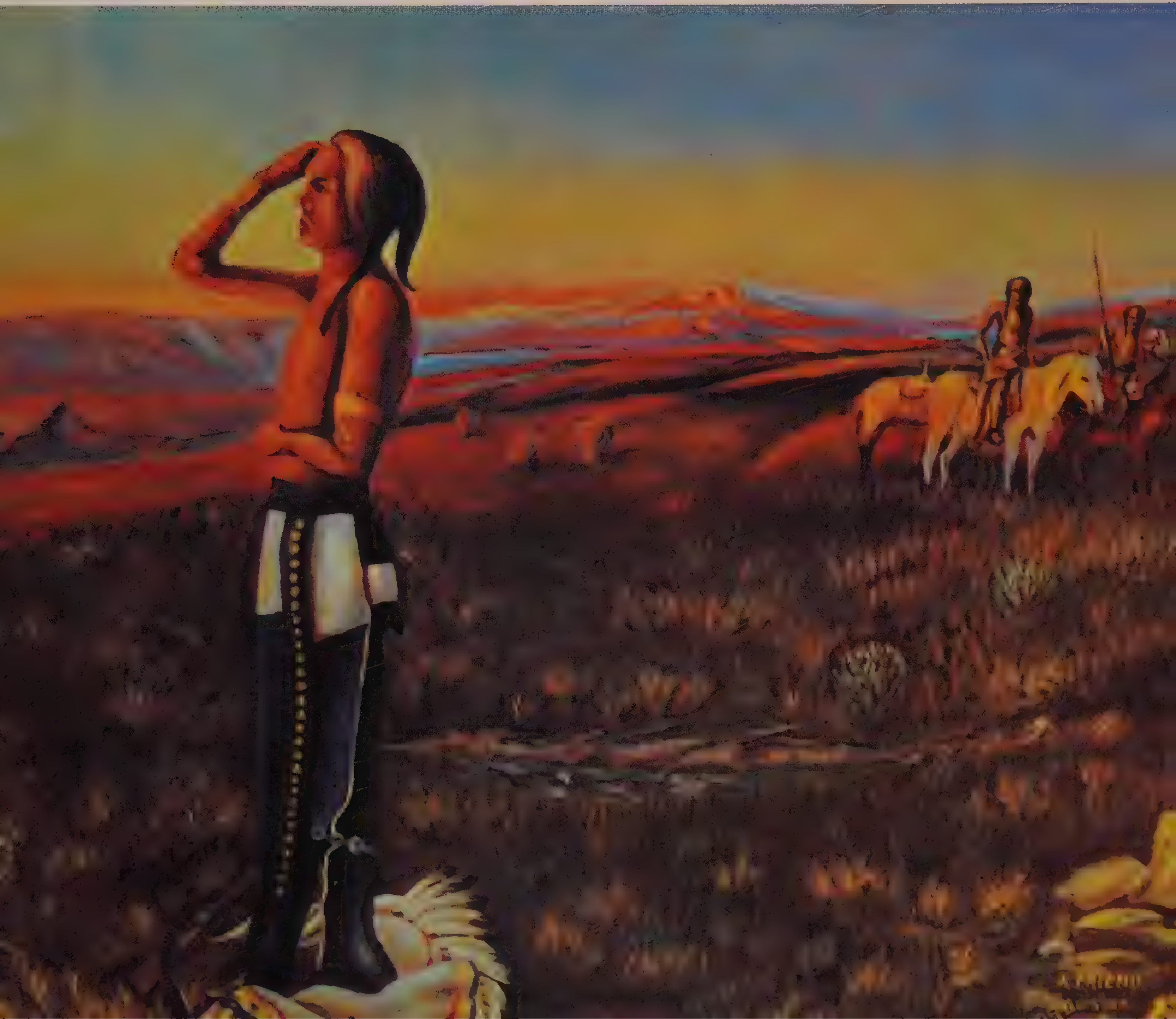
Young Sioux hiding token 1939

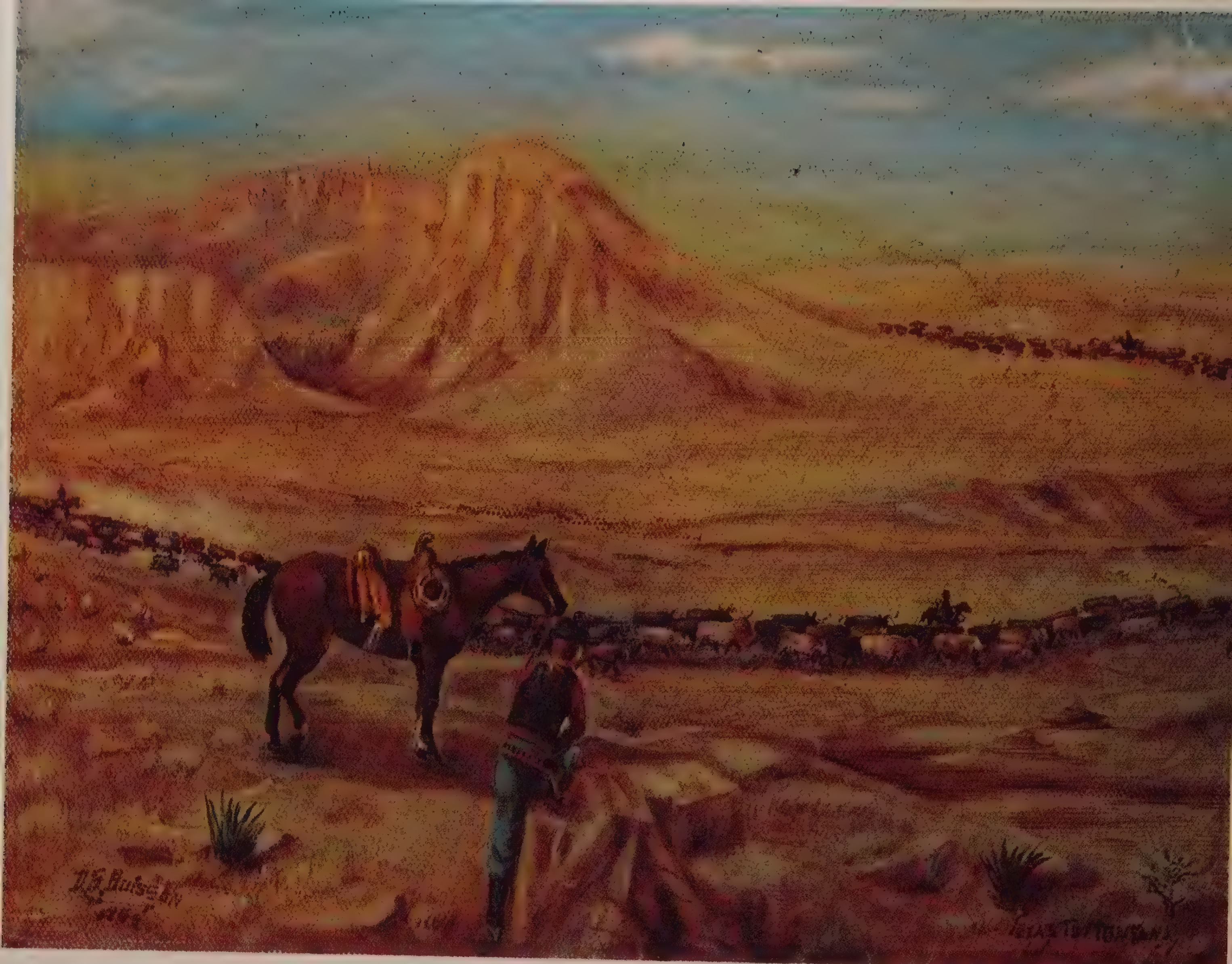


he orphan Half Breed boy 1942

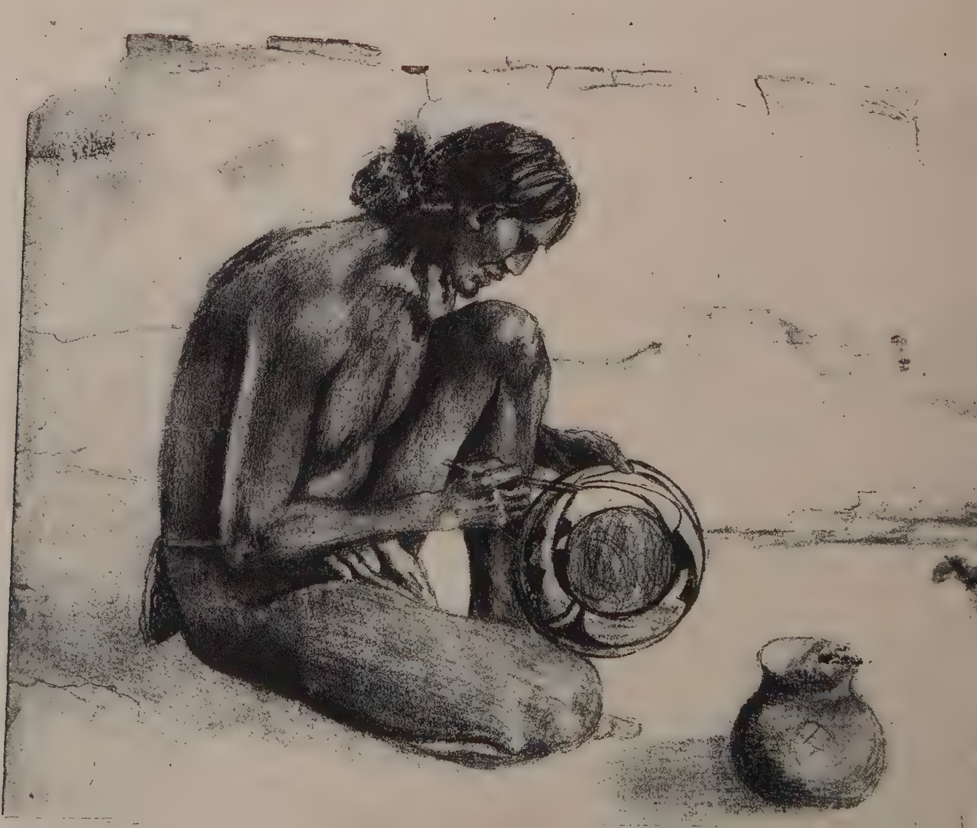


A friend 1945

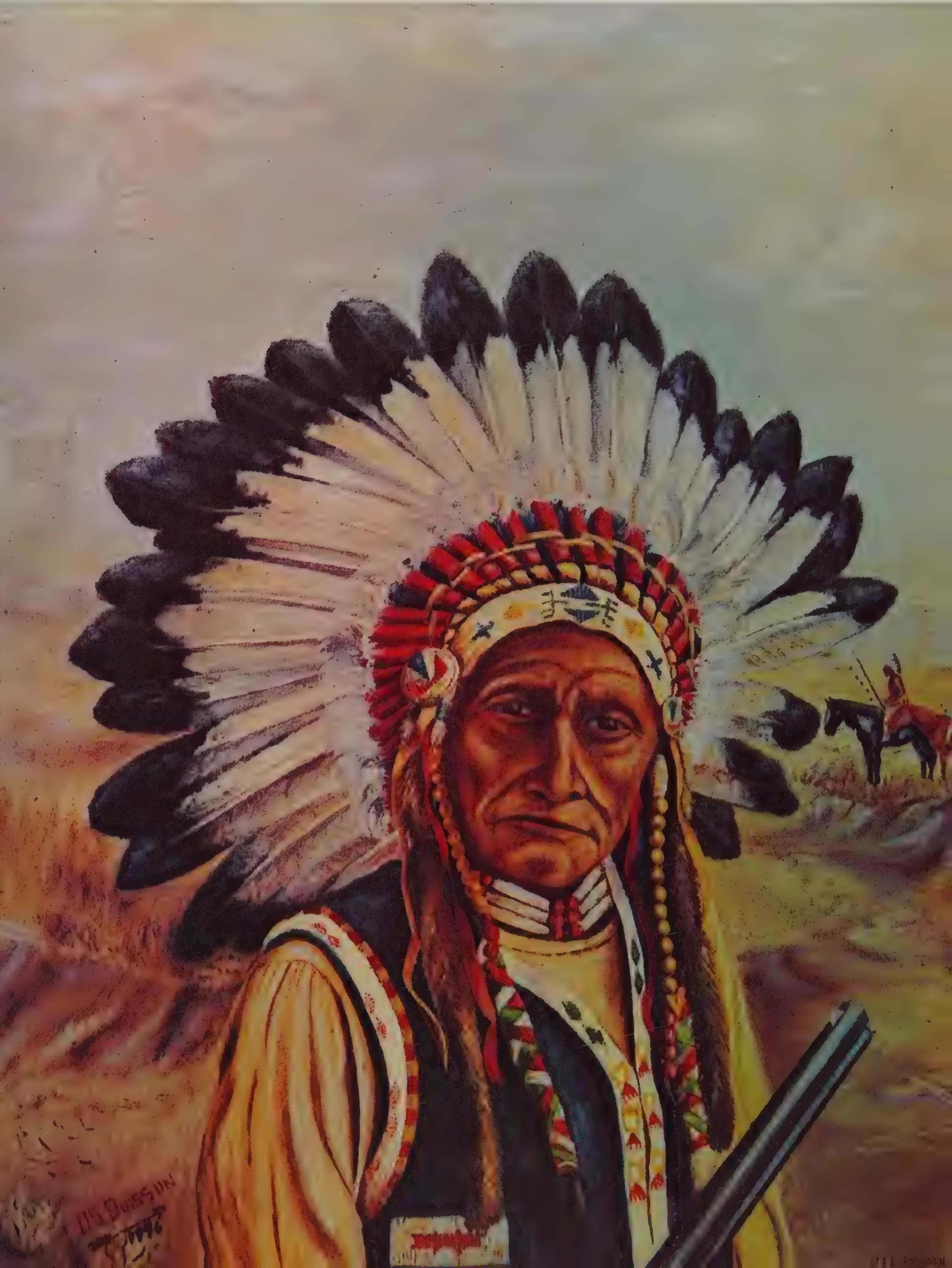



TEXAS TO MONTANA

Texas to Montana 1945

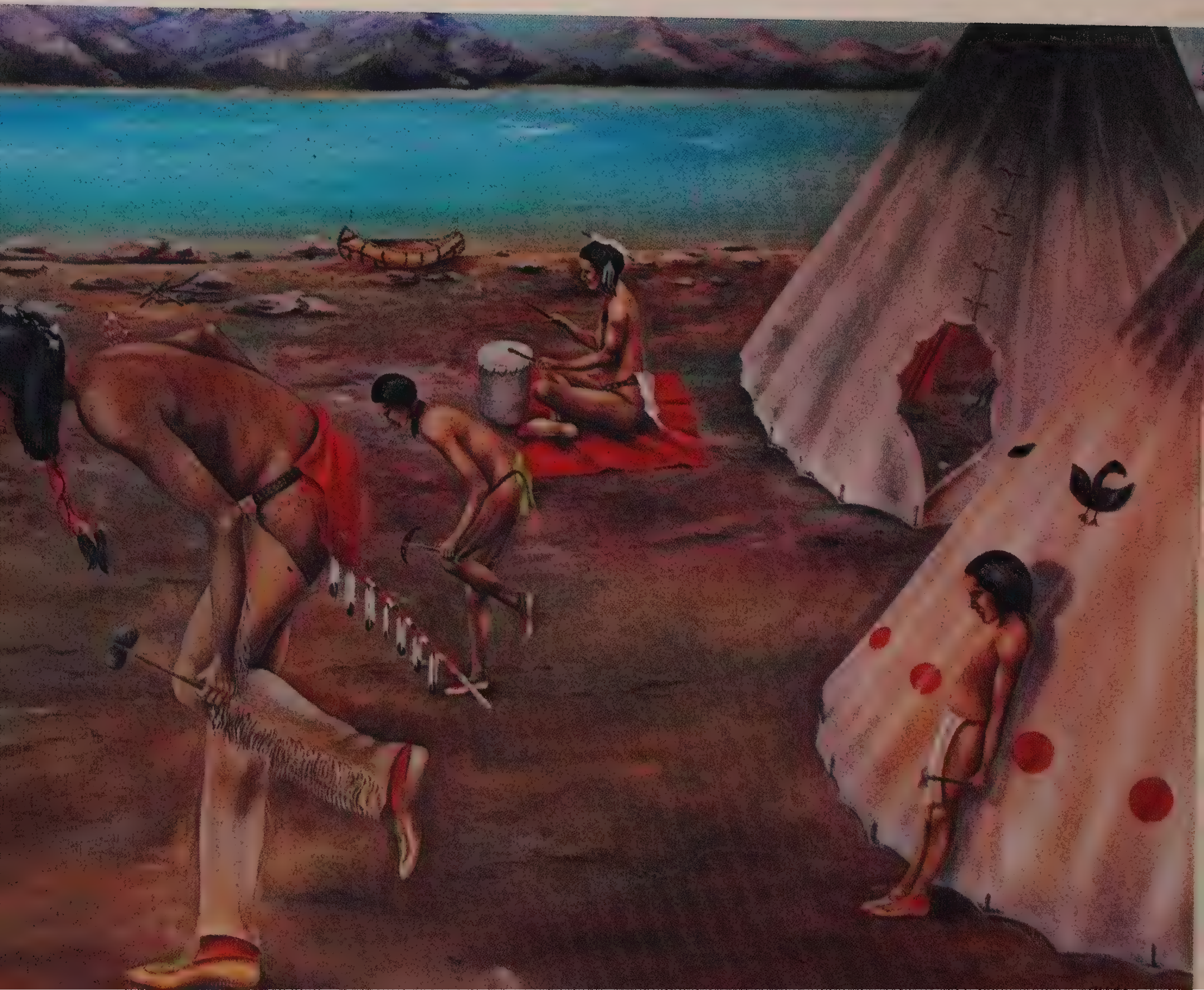


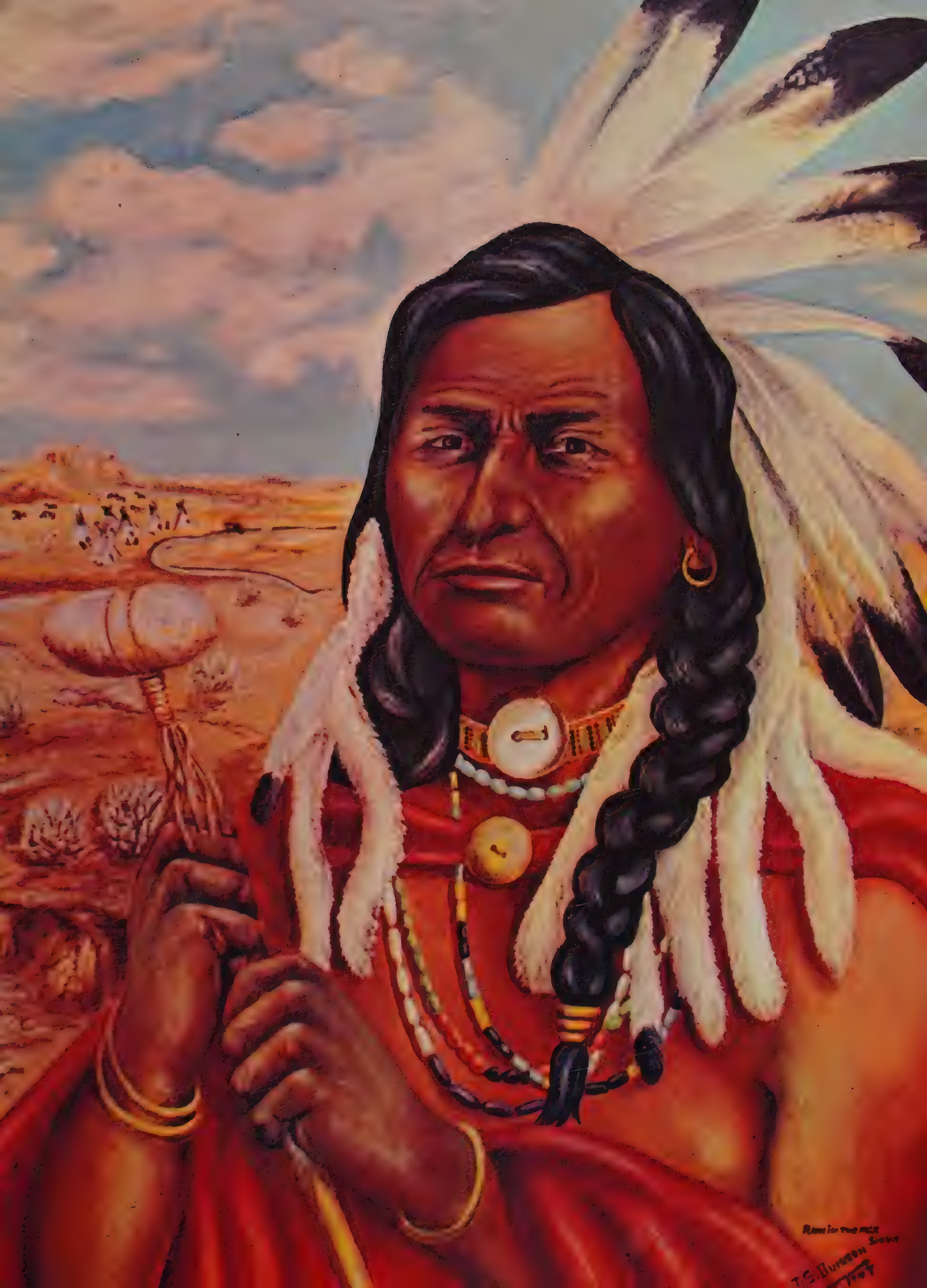
IG RUN (Ute Indian) 1946

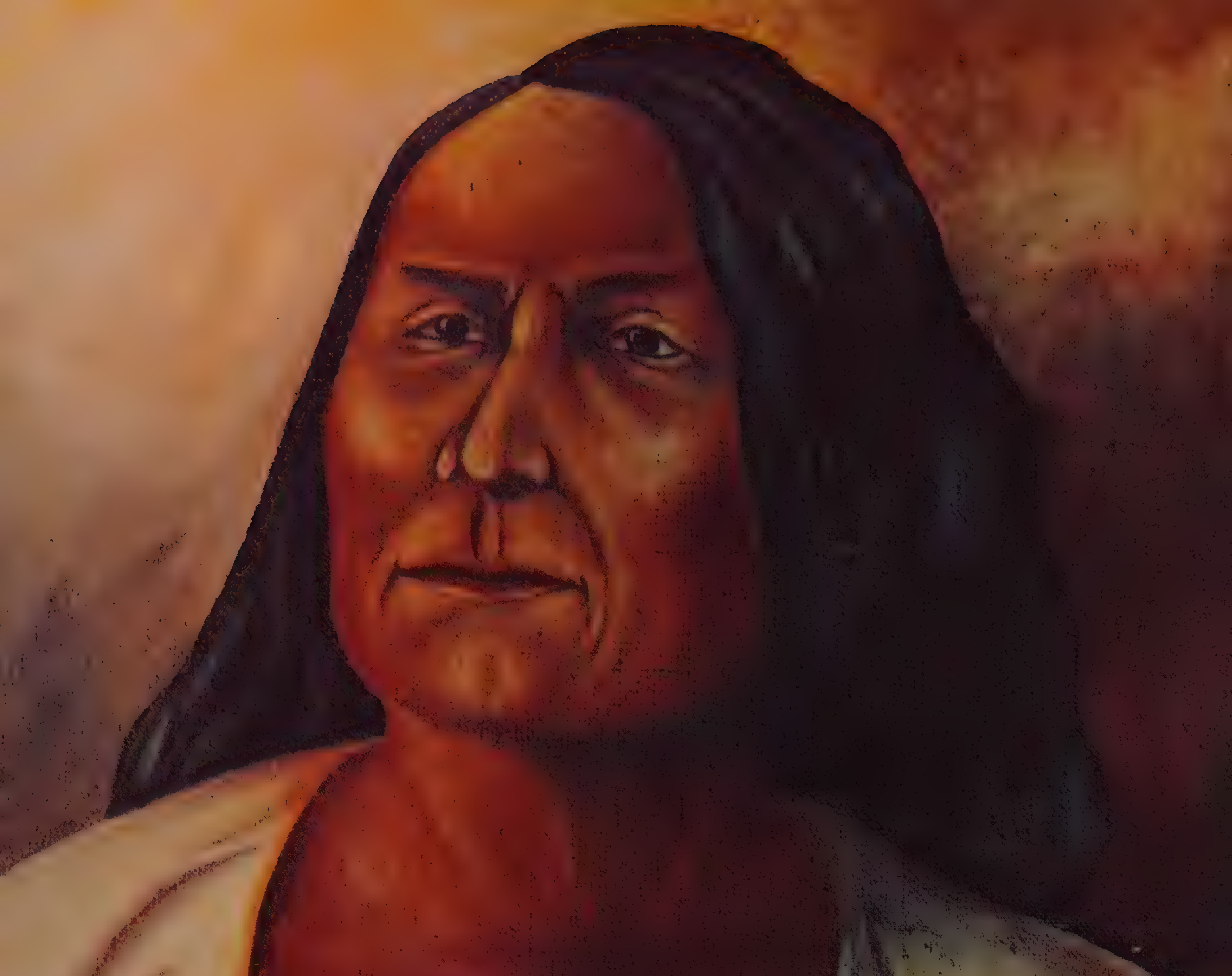

H.S. BUISSON
1946

RAIN IN THE FACE
1947

Dancing teacher 1947

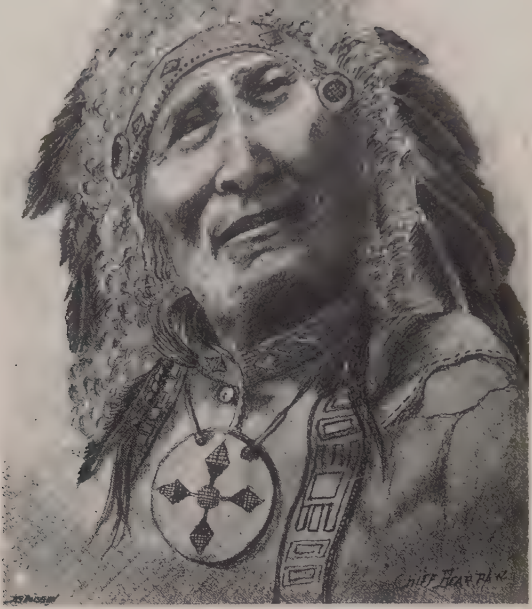



Rain in the Face
Sioux

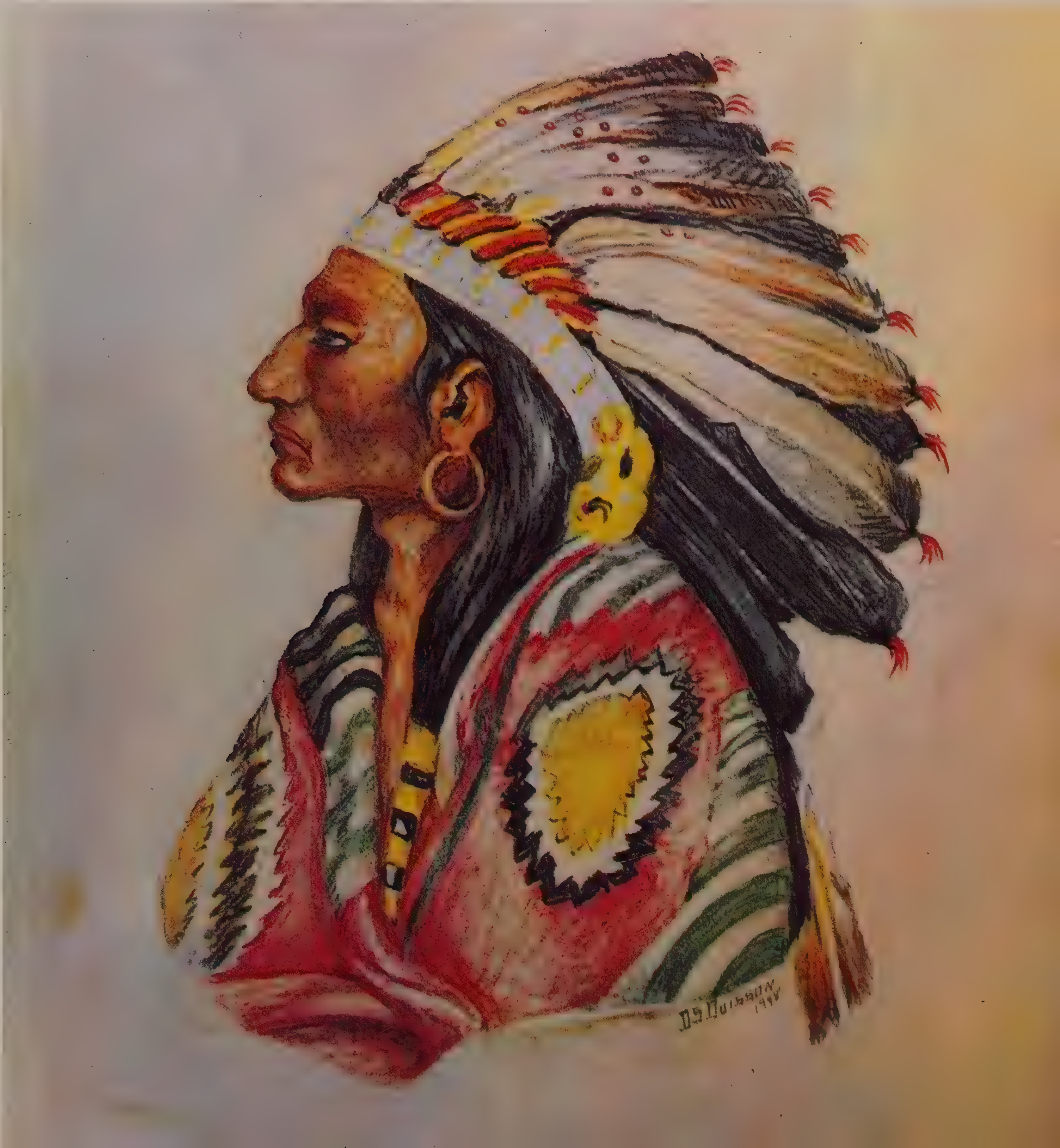

D S BURSON
1948

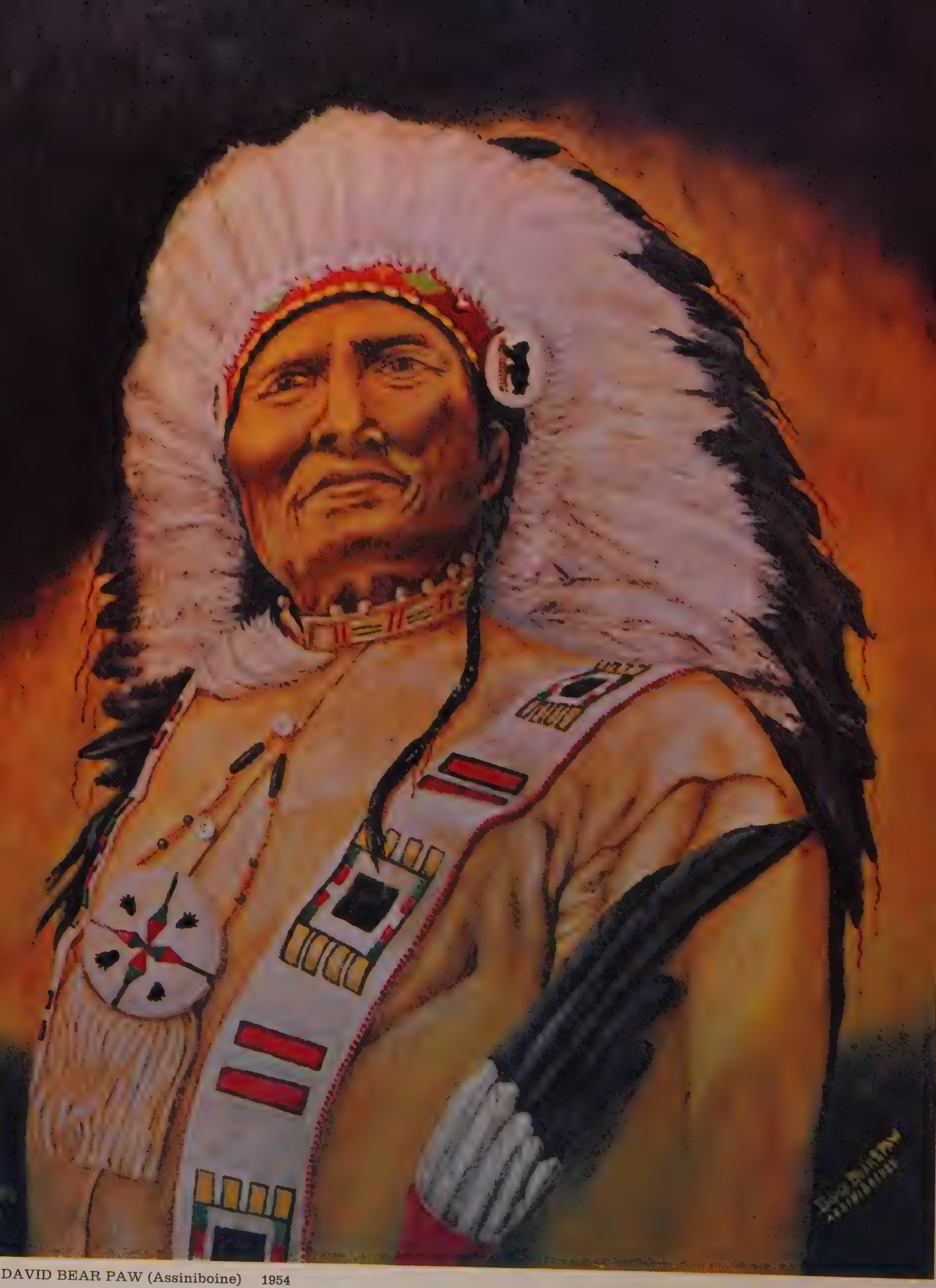
GALL (Sioux Chief) 1948

The original
pencil sketch
for the
DAVID BEAR PAW
painting on the
following page


Chief Bear Paw

No title (Crayon drawing) 1948


DS Buisson
1948



DAVID BEAR PAW (Assiniboine)   1954

CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLE OF THE LITTLE BIG HORN

How Custer and his Command rode to their Death at the Hands of the Indian Allies.

I HAVE had so much to do, in the ordinary affairs of life at an Indian agency, with the men who fought Custer to the death at the battle of the Little Big Horn, and socially and officially with many of those who were members of the Seventh Horse on that disastrous day in June, 1876, when the flower of the American cavalry was shattered by the war-power of the Sioux Nation, that I have no compunctions to consider nor apologies to offer for telling the Indian side of that fight, which story is not a new one, except in the point of view. I knew very well Captain E. S. Godfrey, of the Seventh Cavalry, now brigadier general, retired, who wrote the article that is given the place in military history. I was even able to assist him to the extent of supplying him with the names of the Indians who were prominent in the battle. He has covered the whole bloody field with the exactitude of a man devoted to military science; he knew — as I could not possibly know, except on hearsay — the disposition of the troops that day. He has given to the world a very even-tempered and dispassionate story, which has been universally indorsed by persons familiar with the campaign of 1876. The unfortunate circumstances that involved the action of some members of Custer's command, and which led to such bitter criticism and comment for years after the battle, are now being lost sight of, or talked about only when grizzled veterans, who were subalterns thirty years ago, get together to fight over their battles.

To most people the Custer battle is a matter of history, to be remembered because of the heroism and dash of the men who died on the field, but holding no interest of a living character. I have convictions as to the points in contention between the survivors of the Seventh Cavalry. From what leading Indians in the engagement have told me of the fight, I am of the opinion that if Custer's obvious plan of battle had been carried out, — if Reno had struck the upper end of the Sioux Camp when Custer struck the village at its lower end, — the event might have been changed; and while the Custer force may not have been strong enough to defeat the Indians, there would at least have been no such disaster as that which overtook the leader of the cavalry and the men with him. I do not know that Major Reno, under his orders, could have done other than he did in making the attack as soon as he was within striking distance, but believe that, if he had gone to the support of Custer when the latter sent orders to Benteen to "come at once," — orders that might as well apply to Reno as Benteen, — it would have been impossible for the Indians to overwhelm the entire regiment as they did the five troops comprising Custer's immediate command. I am not at all fearful that this flat statement of a conviction acquired by many years of personal contact and friendly relations with the Indians who participated in the fight, and not from any prejudiced military authority, will embroil me in a dispute. The matter admits of no dispute.

The big figures in the fight, from the military point of view, were General George A. Custer, Lieutenant Colonel commanding the Seventh Cavalry, and Chief Gall of the Hunkpapa Sioux. There were others to dispute the supremacy of Gall, as Crow King, also a Hunkpapa, and Crazy Horse, who though an Oglala, had long affiliated with the Cheyennes. Sitting Bull was a factor only in that his immediate followers, who subsisted by the chase, were camped in an ideal game country, which brought a large body of the Sioux together for the summer hunt, and their assemblage was effected in such manner that the military power of the United States had not the remotest idea of their great strength. I knew Custer personally but not well. Gall I knew intimately in all the circumstances of life — as well as one man can know another of alien race.

General Custer was not the dashing, devil-may-care, hard-riding and fast-fighting mounted soldier that the romancers have made him out. He was a careful, painstaking man and officer, devoted to his profession of arms and properly appreciating the tools he had to work with. The dash that was supposed to be his principal characteristic was merely a part of the plan of a man who knows the essentials to success. He was not careless of consequences in any of the matters of life. He was a reserved and somewhat reticent man. He held the admiration of his officers and soldiers, not because he was their idol, one whom they might follow unthinkingly, but because they knew him to be a thorough soldier. He might go into an undertaking when he knew the chances were against him, but he would not do it in a spirit of bravado. He guessed, nearer than any one else, the power of the Sioux, and he would undoubtedly have accepted the offer of reinforcements for the Seventh, in the one battalion of the Second Cavalry that was offered him, but for the fact that recent events compelled him to the accomplishment of a work that would give him such a standing before the nation that the powers existing at that time would not dare to interfere further with his military career. He believed that the Seventh Cavalry could chastise the Indians as well without as with the assistance of any other organization, and he did not want to divide the credit if the campaign was successful. Under ordinary circumstances, if he had been in good standing, and free to act on his unprejudiced judgment, he would doubtless have taken all the forces he could control before going into the field against an unnumbered enemy.

Custer was not in favor with General Grant, then President. An official report made by Custer had an important bearing upon the dealings of some persons closely and officially connected with the administration, and the President was touched to the quick. With the Belknap affair threatening him with the annihilation of his hopes, he was stirred out of his usual habits, and he became enraged. Custer was sent for to report in Washington and explain. His explanation did not tend to ingratiate him with the President. He was kept in Washington in a state of uneasiness, while the command was being made ready for the expedition that was aimed to break the power of the hostile Indians of the West. He appealed to the President as a soldier, and General Terry, then in command of the Department of Dakota, made an appeal for him. It was only at the last moment that President Grant permitted Custer to be ordered to his regiment, and even then he was held in a subordinate position, effectually, for if he had not been in disfavor at Washington it is reasonably certain that he would have had a larger part in the preparation for the expedition, and the guidance of it, than he did. He was given his command as lieutenant colonel of the Seventh Regiment of Cavalry, Sturgis, its colonel, being on detached service. Thus it was that Custer went into the affair that culminated on the Little Big Horn. He had much to gain from the happy event of a desperate venture, and very little to lose. But he made his dispositions with great care, going to the — with him — unheard-of length of taking his officers into council and conferring with them when he thought he was within striking distance of the enemy.

Gall was no more of a diplomat than Custer. He was a fighting man. He had fought his way to the chieftaincy of a people who recognized in a large degree the merit that goes with personal prowess and skill in battle. He had plenty of courage and dash, and he was gifted with the qualities that Sitting Bull, diplomat and medicine man, lacked entirely. He was a power in the council over which Sitting Bull dominated, although the latter was not a war-chief. It was the generalship of Gall that kept the strength of the Indians concealed from the white soldiers, in spite of the fact that the forces had been in conflict on June 17, preceding the Little Big Horn affair, when Crazy Horse actually defeated General Crook. This was before the union of the hostile forces, but it should have been sufficient indication of the strength of the Sioux allies.

Gall kept his forces moving over a wide expanse of territory, though rarely getting far from his base in the neighborhood of the Little and Big Horns. How well he and his fellow tribesmen managed in concealing their location and superior strength was demonstrated by the fact that, three days previous to the battle on the Little Big Horn, Custer announced his intention of following the hostiles even if the trail led to Nebraska or the agencies on the Missouri River. It was Gall who directed the repulse of the Reno force. It was Gall's knowledge of men and military affairs that led the Indians to leave Reno undisturbed while they were crushing Custer, he having so disposed his forces that Custer was completely surrounded and cut off when he reached the spot from which he had planned to strike the village of the hostiles. It was not until within an hour of the end that Custer came to know approximately the power of the enemy, — a fact that demonstrates military capacity of a high order in the leader of the opposing forces, considering the number of Indians in the field, the nature of the country, and the equipment of the white forces in scouts. Gall, Crow King, and Crazy Horse had plainly out-generaled the commanders of the three columns sent against them, in hiding their strength and eventually choosing the spot to give battle — and the greatest of the three war-chiefs was Gall.

But Gall was an Indian with an Indian's limitations, and his soldiers savages, else it might not have been necessary for anybody to aim criticisms at Reno. I never could understand why Gall did not press his advantage after annihilating the Custer detachment, and throw his whole strength against Reno's position. Gall never gave me any satisfactory reason; other Indians have told me that the people, having defeated the soldiers at very small cost to themselves, did not want to throw their lives away in forcing a position that was susceptible to defense and was defended against the weak attacks made on it during the evening after the Custer fight and the next morning. There is a vast deal of independence in the Indian soldier, and the probabilities are that the warriors had had enough of blood considering the price they would have to pay for more scalps. It is also to be considered that the Sioux, though an excellent cavalry soldier in a dash, is not built on lines to make a sustained attack with the certainty of losses. Then the supreme authority was vested in a council of chiefs, and Sitting Bull dominated that council both before and after the battle.

During the night of June 25 — the day of the battle — there was a celebration in the Sioux camp, a wild orgy of blood. There was no council; nothing took place that could be called a deliberative meeting. Sitting Bull had made good his promise that a great defeat would be sustained by the whites; he was not the sort of man to jeopardize the reputation he had established for making good medicine, and it was his business to get the people out of the locality as soon as he could, for he knew that General Terry and Colonel Gibbon would not be long in coming to the support of Custer, and he therefore encouraged the license of that night. Gall, supported by Crazy Horse, directed what movement there was against Reno, but the warriors did not go into it with zest. Perhaps Gall failed in his authority. In any event, he never explained to me why he did not follow up the advantage gained by the annihilation of Custer's squadron.

The war which had its culmination in the Custer affair originated primarily in the need for giving the white man the privilege of mining in the Black Hills. Other excuses were made. It was said that it was necessary to get the Indians on reservations in order to permit travel through the country; that they were hostiles and engaged in continuous warfare, — all of which was true enough. But under the Treaty of 1868, as I have pointed out elsewhere, the Indians of the Sioux nation were given the right to hunt and travel in the ceded country. There was no doubt about the language of the treaty. No attempt was made to get an amendment of this treaty, and neither is there any doubt that its provisions were ignored in other respects. The Indians believed themselves to be absolute owners of the land, and their right to it was undisputed, subject to the right of eminent domain in the United States; but this did not deter the government from sending an expedition into the Black Hills in 1874. On the report of that expedition being made public, there was a rush of white men into the Hills, as there must have been in view of the official statement that the country was rich in gold. The white man would not stay out and the Indian must be gotten out. Of course there was no use quarreling with this condition. The War Department was active in getting the Indians under control, and in the early winter of 1875–76, notice was sent out through the various

Sioux agencies for the wandering Sioux to come in to their respective agencies or be left in a position where they would be treated as hostiles. Some of the Indians may have gotten word of the purpose of the government, but most of them claimed entire ignorance of the order. Sitting Bull, who was undoubtedly the dominating spirit of all the hostiles then in the field, paid no attention to the affair whatever, except to solicit the numerous members of the bands who left the agencies to join his camp. Sitting Bull was thus organizing a force for what he thought would result in a war that would check the advance of the whites in the northwest and give him supreme and potent authority.

Lieutenant General Sheridan directed the movements to capture and bring in the Indians. He judged that a winter campaign, started when the Indians were still suffering from the effects of short commons in the winter, would be the easiest means of rounding them up.

In February it was arranged that Custer was to go after Sitting Bull with cavalry, while General Crook was to take care of the capture of Crazy Horse and his followers. The weather was worse as spring approached than it had been during the early winter, and it was impossible for troops from the Missouri River to take the field. Crook went in from the south after Crazy Horse, who was known to be somewhere in the Powder River country. He met the Sioux and Cheyennes, and in the fight that ensued he came off with what was officially described as a "barren victory." As a matter of fact, it was a defeat. Then it was determined to let the campaign stand until spring opened.

In the meantime Custer had gotten into trouble at court, so that, when the campaign opened, he was not given an independent command but was attached to the column under General Terry which marched from Fort Lincoln, May 17. The Indians were somewhere in a wide range of country, their location and strength being both unknown. Terry marched from the east, Crook from the south, leaving Fort Fetterman May 29, while Gibbon went into the hostile country from the west. So far as the battle of the Little Big Horn is concerned, Gibbon and Crook may be eliminated. Terry met Custer at the mouth of the Rosebud, where Gibbon joined them. So little did they know of what was going on that the defeat of General Crook five days previously had not been heard of, nor did Terry know anything of the movements of Crook for three weeks afterward. Major Reno had been on a scout and found the trail of a large party of Indians leading up the Rosebud River. His scouts thought there might be three hundred and fifty lodges in the party. On the day that Reno's scouts discovered the trail, Crook was engaged in fighting the Indians only forty miles away.

On June 22 Terry gave Custer his final orders, and the cavalry command, about six hundred strong, with a pack-train and a party of Ree and Crow scouts, marched out. The night before the command started on the march Terry, Gibbon, and Custer had a council on board the supply steamboat, the Far West, commanded by Captain Grant Marsh. Grant Marsh was then, as he is still, one of the figures in the navigation of the treacherous and shifty channels of the Missouri and its main arteries. They used to say of him that he could navigate a steamboat on dew, and he is still navigating the Missouri north of Bismarck. That council was not a very cheerful affair, for, although there was no knowledge of disaster, still the officers did not know the strength or whereabouts of the Indians. No one believed that the hostiles were nearly as numerous as they were. General Terry, who was an excellent soldier, had little personal knowledge of Indian warfare or the people, and did not think they were in very great strength. Custer, basing his opinion on the report brought in by Reno, thought there were certainly a thousand warriors in the hostile camp and possibly one thousand five hundred. His figures were higher than those of anybody else; but he would have estimated the enemy at eight hundred if he had depended on the information that was in the hands of the commanding officers. How far they all were from the fact was to be demonstrated in awful fashion before many days.

The command left the camp with some show of military pomp, the cavalry being reviewed by Terry, Gibbon, and Custer as it marched out. The trail lay up the Rosebud, and the march was uneventful, except that Custer appeared to be strangely depressed and departed from his customary method of doing things without consulting his officers. On two occasions he had officers' call sounded, and each time he was abstracted, and almost genial in responding to remarks made to him. He took precautions to provide for the secrecy and caution of the advance, that were remarkable considering the country and his usual tactics; and he hung anxiously on the expression of opinions by men to whom he would ordinarily have paid no attention. When the scouts had approximately located the hostiles on the Little Big Horn and it was known that a conflict was impending, he was undoubtedly impressed by the attitude, rather than by the reports, of the Ree and Crow scouts. These Indian scouts did not see the main body of the hostiles, but judging from the evidences they saw along the trail, concluded that a large number of Indians had passed over it. The encampment, however, of the one large force strung along the trail with the several bands widely separated, was mistaken for a succession of camps of an ordinary hunting-party.

The scouts were not anxious for a fight. That appears certain. They did not think the cavalry force was sufficient to cope with the Sioux. General Godfrey says that "Mitch" Bouyer, the guide and Crow interpreter, asked him how many Indians they expected to find, and being told between a thousand and fifteen hundred, asked if he thought the command could whip that many. Godfrey said, "Yes." Bouyer said, "Well, you can bet you are going to have a —— of a big fight." The Rees were depressed up to the last. They were inactive during a day or two before the battle. They and their people had had much experience of Sioux warfare and had suffered a great deal at the hands of the very people they were looking for. They made medicine continually, and before the fight they were all anointed by their medicine men and their prayer-dances were solemn and ominous.

Custer was affected by the attitude of the scouts, although he declared, when an interpreter said the Indians believed there would be a two or three days' fight, that he guessed they could be taken care of in one day; but his officers noticed that he smiled sadly when he made the comment.

The trail was found to lead over the divide between the Rosebud and the Little Big Horn, and the marching was rapid, though not of a nature to exhaust the troops or horses, and during the night of the 24th of June a considerable distance was made; for it was generally understood that the Indians were acquainted with the presence of the troops, and rapid action was thought necessary. Even then the command had no knowledge of the location or number of the enemy, though the last halt was made only twelve miles from the Sioux village.

Up to that morning it had been the intention of Custer to strike the camp early in the morning of the 26th if he could get within striking distance. His knowledge of Indian warfare taught him that such would be the proper time for an attack, and it was a most unusual thing to attack Indians assembled in force in the daytime. Even if the general had had full and accurate knowledge of the number and disposition of the Indians, he would not have chosen to attack in the middle of the day unless compelled to do so. If he had been fully advised, he certainly would not have divided his command, as he did when the last halt was made, or soon thereafter. It appears that an order for a division of the command was given after the start was made, though Benteen, with his battalion, was at once deployed to the left and front, in the general direction of the upper end of the Indian village. Reno's battalion, which had the van, kept on until it came upon a tepee containing the body of a dead Indian. Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull says in her story that this was the body of Chief Circling Bear's brother, a man of some prominence, and that he was killed in a skirmish with the Crows a few days previous, the Sioux believing they were engaged with Crows and Shoshones instead of with Crook. The Ree scouts with the Custer party set fire to the tepee.

When Reno had gotten very close to the Little Big Horn, he received orders to press forward as fast as was prudent and charge the village, and the whole command would support him. Reno, acting on these orders, crossed the Little Big Horn and made ready for the charge.

Custer went off somewhat to the right of the river and followed a ridge, which he held to until he took his last position at its extreme abrupt point, overlooking the valley of the Little Big Horn. Benteen had moved out to the left, but the nature of the country forced him to the right, and he eventually struck Reno's trail and came up with the major's command, after the latter had retreated across the Little Big Horn, and taken position on the hill east of the river, where the seven troops practically remained until Terry and Gibbon came up from the north on the 27th.

In the Indian village on the west bank of the Greasy Grass, as the Indians call the Little Big Horn, ten thousand or more Sioux, male and female, including their allies, the Cheyennes, and a few — not many — Arapahoes, were awaiting the attack from the lower end of the camp, they having for more than an hour seen Custer's column marching along the ridge in that direction. The village was concentrated beyond the usual conditions in a large gathering of bands — the only evidence of anticipation of warfare. It had not been located with a view to defending it from attack. Gall told me that its location had not been decided upon in advance. It had no military advantage, except that it was located on the west side of a river that was easily fordable in a good many places and not particularly difficult of access. It was proven by demonstration that the encampment was exposed to attack from either end, and if the chiefs had been on the defensive, or thought that the soldiers might approach in force from the east and succeed in crossing the river, they certainly would not have left their village, situated along the river for a distance of over three miles, so open to easy attack.

The leading Indians in the affair told me, when talking with them in reference to the conflict, that they had great confidence in their numerical strength. They supposed that the soldiers knew how strong they were. They were not inviting attack — not "spoiling for a fight." What they wanted, as a whole, was to be left alone to hunt the game with which the country abounded; that it was in no sense a war-party except in the capacity and readiness of the members to fight when called upon. The fact that the camp was full of women and children is evidence of this attitude of the Indians, and the writers who have said that there were fewer than the ordinary number of non-combatants in the camp of a hunting-party are in error. When the Indians left the agencies to join Sitting Bull, they took their families with them. They expected and desired to keep away from the soldiery. Of course, when the number of the people who had joined Sitting Bull had grown so great, the medicine chief became less anxious to avoid the gage of battle. He felt strong in numbers, and the war-chiefs had a profound sense of their ability to give a good account of themselves against any body of troops that might be sent against them.

They had been in camp on the Greasy Grass for some days. They had met and administered a sharp check to Crook on the Rosebud during the previous week. They had had a brush with a party sent out by Crook, under command of Lieutenant Sibley, which was accompanied by John F. Finnerty of the Chicago "Times," and the detachment had narrowly escaped annihilation. They were rich in provisions, for the country was full of buffalo, and they had plenty of ammunition. Their condition was ideal for the Indian of that or any other day.

The great camp was given up to rejoicing. Every night there were dances, — social affairs according to Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull, — but it is not to be doubted that the war-dance figured on the programme. Before they met with Crook they had halted for a sun-dance and the sun-dance lodge had been found by Custer; in it was hanging the scalp of a white man that had been forgotten, or left in defiance of any troops that might happen along.

Hunting-parties kept coming and going in the direction of the Big Horn Mountains. The women and children covered the prairie hunting for tipsina (Indian turnips), and the camp was teeming with the life of a great Indian village, — the largest that had congregated in freedom in several years, in that country at least.

In the councils was the flower of the hostiles of the

Sioux nation. They may be called hostiles for purposes of identification, as they were designated that way in the official reports, though they were dubbed that before any overt acts had been committed. Sitting Bull was the principal chief of the party, which was remarkable from the fact that he was not a war-chief. He had a great reputation on account of his medicine, and the people at the agencies had come to believe that his medicine was invincible because he remained off the reservation. This reputation attracted to his camp hundreds of people who had no other desire than to hunt the buffalo. With his bands they thought the hunting might be safely undertaken, and with the certainty of success. In order to ensure themselves a welcome with him, they were in the habit of taking presents to Sitting Bull, and he used these presents to great advantage in maintaining his popularity with the chiefs. He made medicine continually, and had been prophesying for some time that the Sioux would inflict a great defeat on the whites somewhere on or near the Big Horn rivers.

Gall, of the Hunkpapas, was the principal of the war-chiefs, though Crow King, of the same band, was highly regarded by his people. Gall was in the prime of life, brave as a lion, strong in council and a natural leader of men. Later on, both of these chiefs had nothing but contempt for Sitting Bull. I know not how it was then, but they were probably afraid of his medicine and content to leave him alone. Crazy Horse, a fierce and warlike man, was an Oglala Sioux who had been affiliated with the Northern Cheyennes for many years, and had one of their women as a wife. He was killed, bayoneted by a soldier, while resisting being put in the guardhouse the next year, at Camp Robinson, Nebraska. The Minniconjous were under the leadership of Lame Deer, who was killed on Lame Deer Creek, Montana, some time later, in a fight with the soldiers under General Miles. He was succeeded by Hump, who was also a prominent figure in the camp on the Little Big Horn. Big Road was the chief man of the Oglalas in the camp. Black Moon of the Hunkpapas, He Dog of the Oglalas, and Two Moon of the Cheyennes were all notable in council and in the field. They spoke for and led a fighting force, including boys above fourteen years of age, that was not less than twenty-five hundred strong. The distribution of the bands after the fight, their straggling return to the agencies, and their method of surrendering in small parties, made it difficult to tell how many people were in the camp on the Little Big Horn. The Indians themselves, even Gall, who was very intelligent and truthful, could not tell how many warriors there were. The fact that they numbered twice as many as Custer expected to find, taking his outside figures, shows how well they had hidden their strength from the white and red scouts. It has frequently been said that there were many white men in the camp. This is not true. The Sioux were fought as Indians. If they had been handled as white men are handled in battle, the opposing forces aligned for the fight, the outcome would have been different.

With the chiefs who dominated in the hostile camp at that time I had afterwards a long and — except in the case of Sitting Bull — a friendly and rather intimate acquaintance. Gall and Crow King, intelligent men who saw that the day of the Indian was past, retained the confidence of their people in peace as they had in war, and they, with some of the others, did much to bring the bands under their influence to a realizing sense of the necessity for accommodating themselves to the ways of the whites. From these men and many others of less prominence I had the story of the Custer battle and the disposition of their people. Therefore I tell the story of the affair as it undoubtedly took place, allowing no leeway for the Indian's ignorance of time and distance, and correcting by the competent evidence of such officers as were present, with whom I afterwards lived in the close companionship of an agency located next door to a military post, the errors incidental to the Indian relation. A single relation is not relied upon. It could not be, as is shown in the story of Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull, who is one of the most intelligent women of her nation and very truthful. She makes obvious errors in time and distance. But the story of the battle and the events preceding it have been told me by so many tongues, and under such widely different circumstances, that I glean the facts from a wide field of fancy and personal exploits. As to the process of events on the 25th of June, 1876, the disposition of the forces and the actual fighting, Gall and other chiefs told the story to me with great attention to detail.

GOES AHEAD, ONE OF CUSTERS SCOUTS
Edward S. Curtis Photo

CHAPTER IX

THE BATTLE OF THE LITTLE BIG HORN
(*Continued*)

Describing the Battle Array of the Indians and how Custer was overwhelmed by Numbers.

The Indian village was strung along the west bank of the Little Big Horn for a distance of between three and four miles, reckoning from the camp of the Blackfeet Sioux at the upper end of the village, where Reno made his attack, to the outermost tepees of the Cheyennes, extending to a point just opposite to, or perhaps a little below, the hill upon which Custer made his stand. That the camp was not pitched in accordance with the tribal custom when on the warpath or in a country in which an attack might be anticipated, was evidenced by the fact that the village had been laid out without regard to the rule which gave the Hunkpapas their hereditary privilege of camping on the outer edge and holding the place giving access to the village. The Blackfeet band, which was not numerously represented, had, as I have said, the upper end of the village. Next below them the Hunkpapas were located, and they were in great strength. Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull said there were four hundred lodges of them, but in this she was obviously mistaken. Next them were the Minniconjous; then the Oglalas; then, some distance back from the river, the Brules; the Sans Arcs camped just below on the river, and the Cheyennes held the place at the lower end of the encampment. Out to the west and southwest an immense herd of ponies grazed, for the hostiles were well mounted then. The river could be forded at both the upper and lower ends of the camp, and was not difficult at any other point except that the banks were soft and not easily scaled. A dismounted man might cross in many places. After the commencement of the fight, Gall followed Reno across at the upper end of the village. Crazy Horse with the Cheyennes and most of the Sioux forded below. The women crossed where they pleased, and took a hand while the battle was in progress by stampeding the horses.

The morning of the battle the Indians knew where Custer was and what his strength was. They knew that there was only one column within striking distance, and that they had the soldiers greatly outnumbered; and strong in numbers, and with the assurance given them by Sitting Bull, they prepared themselves to meet the attack. It had been decided the previous night that, if the troops attacked the village, the Indians would fight, but that they would not go far from their camp to intercept the soldiers. There was much excitement in camp on the morning of the beautiful day when Custer led his men into the jaws of death, and every preparation for a hurried flitting had been made by the women in case the fight had gone against the Indians. No tepees were struck, nor were the ponies, other than those used as mounts by the Indians, brought in; but the camp equipage had been bundled up, a precaution indicating some fear of the result; this, however, would be done by the women in the face of any important event, even though the men were quite indifferent in their confidence.

The location of the Hunkpapa band, with the few Blackfeet tepees at that end of the village which lay up the river, was due to the fact that Gall assumed that if an attack was made it would be at that point. The chief would choose for himself the most exposed place. But when the Sioux first saw the column advancing, it was evident to them that Custer intended striking the lower end of the village. They were ignorant of the fact that a considerable portion of the command had been detached, and that Custer had only five troops with him on the ridge. The Indians have always maintained that they were ignorant of the approach of Reno until he was within so short a distance that, if he had rushed his troops into the upper end of the village, he could not have failed of throwing the encampment into disorder and doing much damage before he could have been repulsed. This statement is in contravention of the theory of the military authorities, — or some of them, — but it is undoubtedly true. There was no organized opposition to Reno's advance until he was so close that he might have been among the tepees had he charged as ordered by Custer. Reno was under cover from the time he left Custer until after he had crossed the river, and the great mass of the Indians were congregated at the lower end of the village near the Cheyenne camp, where they expected the approaching column to attack.

Soon after detaching Reno's battalion, Custer reached the eastern end of the long, high ridge, which was in full view of the Indians for a distance of quite six miles. When Reno crossed the Little Big Horn and formed on the side of the river occupied by the Indian encampment, he was nearly two miles from the nearest tepees. His course lay straight across the bottom, and was protected from the sight of the people in the village by the fringe of timber just outside the Blackfeet tepees. He advanced without hindrance and with some speed to the timber, or very close to it, without seeing any considerable number of Indians.

Some straggling Indians reconnoitring the outskirts of the village had seen Reno's column and signaled the camp that soldiers were approaching. The Indians of the main camp supposed that the signs made that soldiers were coming had reference to the Custer column, which the warriors at the lower end of the camp had been watching for some time, and no attention was paid to this signaling until some young men rode into the village and announced the approach of another body of troops. When the position was made clear, and a body of warriors had ridden pell-mell through the camp from the lower end of the village, a distance of fully three miles, Reno had halted at the low bench bordering a second elevation of the valley, dismounted his command, and begun firing at the scattered Indians. The rattling of bullets through the tepee poles of the Hunkpapa and Blackfeet was the first warning the Indians really had of Reno's approach. That was the psychological moment. If Reno had charged the village then he might have destroyed a considerable portion of it. There was little hindrance to his advance, but he sat supine until the Indians led by Gall appeared before him in considerable force. The Ree scouts held the left of the Reno command. At them Gall delivered a charge, and they turned and fled, not stopping altogether until they were comfortably quartered at the supply camp on the Yellowstone, fully one hundred miles from the battlefield. Reno moved his command over to the right, abandoning the forward movement, took a position in a fringe of timber, and waited — for what?

If Reno had known it, his sudden attack had struck something very like terror to the people in the village, particularly the upper end of the camp; and by the same token, his first shots, ineffective as they were, riddled the tepee poles of one of the lodges of the great man of the camp and eliminated him as a factor in the day's proceedings. For a long time after the fight it was supposed that Sitting Bull had had some part in directing it or giving the fighting men the moral support of his presence. As a matter of fact Sitting Bull headed a stampede, which might have become very general if Reno had followed up his advantage.

Sitting Bull had two tepees, containing his family and effects, in the Hunkpapa camp. All the previous evening he had been making medicine and had succeeded in convincing the war-chiefs and warriors that they were due to win a great fight, and he was in great feather the previous night. That morning, when the troops were found to be approaching, Sitting Bull betook himself to his tepee. He had with him two wives and several children and a great deal of household wealth for a nomad — for he had been in constant receipt of presents for many months from the people coming from the several Sioux agencies to join him. These household impedimenta were evidence of his state, but could be discarded in case of a sudden flight.

I have contended always that Sitting Bull was a physical coward. I know it from personal knowledge, also from various incidents related of him, and from the attitude of contempt held toward him by the war-chiefs. But his medicine was great.

That morning he had informed the people that he would remain in his camp and make medicine. There were very few, if any, men in that portion of the camp with him when Reno's bullets rattled through the tepee poles. The surprise created a panic in the heart, never very valorous, of Sitting Bull. He explained afterwards that his capture would mean the loss of his medicine to the Sioux, and he did not want to take any chances when the soldiers rushed into the camp, as he expected they would when the firing began. His ponies were close at hand, and the medicine man got his women and children together and made straight for the hills to the southwest. In the hurry of the flitting one of his twin boys was lost, but that did not halt the doughty medicine-maker. He heard behind him the practically continuous gunfire, and kept on going. He marched for eight or ten miles without stopping, and was still going when couriers overtook him and announced the annihilation of the Custer command. It was late in the afternoon before he returned to the village, and he then arrogantly claimed all the honor for the victory gained, accounting for his absence from the field during the engagement with the troops by announcing that he had been in the hills overlooking the battle-field, engaged in propitiating the evil spirits and invoking the gods of war; and, as I was told by Gall and other prominent chiefs of the Sioux, a majority of these over-credulous people actually believed him, and those lacking sufficient faith to accept his statements absolutely, had no desire to investigate or license to question his assertions.

While Sitting Bull was leaving the camp, Gall was collecting a force to attack Reno. Warriors were riding up through the camp; and the women were making all preparations to leave. The utmost confusion prevailed. Reno, with his troops dismounted in the fringe of timber, suffered no injury at the hands of the Indians, or practically none. How long he remained there is a question. The Indians were not clear about it at all, and the military not very much clearer. Reno seems to have been inspired to get a position back across the river by the fact that a trooper was shot close beside him. It does not appear that he ordered a retreat then, but simply headed one and made with all speed for the Little Big Horn, which he fortunately struck in a fordable place. Of this movement more hereafter will be said, but the helter-skelter nature of it was revealed in a single incident.

The trooper who had been shot close to where Reno was standing was mortally hurt. Dr. Porter, a contract surgeon, went to the assistance of the man. He saw that the wound must result fatally, and he gave the man a narcotic and made him as comfortable as possible. He had paid no attention to what was going on around him, and when he looked up from the sheltered place where the man was lying, the troops were gone and the doctor saw mounted Indians rushing past him after the fleeing troops. Porter was not very well mounted, as he thought, having left his own horse at the supply-camp, and having been given a mount from among the condemned cavalry horses, by the quartermaster. He mounted his horse, drove the spurs into the animal, lay low on his neck, dashed like mad through Indians and troopers, reaching the river with the first of the outfit, and got safely across. Of the three doctors with the command Porter was the only one not killed.

This command made a desperate ride at the bluff on the east side of the river and attained its summit through a ravine.

Soon after reaching a position on the hill, Reno was joined by Benteen, whose détour to the southwest had been ineffective and who had not yet been under fire. Some officers wanted to take their troops out to where firing was heard, and where Custer was undoubtedly engaged, but Reno held the hill. It may have been too late when Benteen came up to do Custer any good, for the last order sent by Custer, written by his adjutant, Lieutenant Cook, directed Benteen to bring up the packs at once. Custer had undoubtedly seen the greater portion of the village when he issued the order. He sent it to Benteen, thinking that he still had an independent command, and that Reno was attacking the upper end of the village. Cook wrote: "Benteen, come on. Big Village. Be quick. Bring packs. P. S. Bring packs." The insistence of the order to bring packs was caused by the necessity for having the ammunition-mules. Moreover Custer had seen enough of the village to know that he would need Benteen's force. But Benteen had joined Reno. If both forces had been moved out — but that is speculation and to be avoided. The military experts have been all over that field. As it was, the larger half of the entire regiment remained on the hill, by no means out of danger, but certainly not where Custer expected it would be, while the commanding officer and the smaller moiety of the command were being, or had been, done to death.

When Reno left the column with his battalion and advanced to the crossing of the river, Custer went on along the trail for a short distance, then turned slightly to the right and struck the ridge. What he saw or heard there doubtless convinced him that he should proceed on and attack the village lower down. That he intended from the beginning of this march along the ridge to go directly to the lower end of the village, is demonstrated by the fact that he never swerved from this course. His movements and the obstacles he encountered up to the end are known only on the relation of the Indians who were opposing him. The things that were done on the battle-field, after the fight, made the affair a delicate subject for the Indians to discuss. They talked to me more freely and frequently than to any other white man whom I know, but it was not easy to hold them to a description of what transpired. For many years they had the impression that they were being examined for the purpose of singling out men for punishment. Gall, who was not concerned in the atrocities that made the battle-field the horror that it was, was diffident in talking of the matter. In spite of his self-possession and courage, he was shy of the subject, except in talking of the affair broadly. He and the other men of his class knew that the amnesty promised at their surrendering in small parties covered all the events of the battle, but they did not go into details in talking of the affair. It is probable that a man like Gall, acting under the tremendous excitement into which an Indian would certainly work himself during a fight, would not be observing the movements of the enemy in the hurry of getting his warriors into position to intercept the advancing column. The last march and stand of Custer is therefore gathered from many sources and was told piecemeal.

When the general saw the village first, he saw only a part of it. Even before he had his first view of it, Iron Cedar had carried the word to Gall, who was pursuing Reno, that the larger force was approaching the lower end of the village and he was needed there. It was about this time that Custer's last order was issued and given to a trumpeter to be carried to Benteen. This probably occurred at about one o'clock — reckoning with the Indian's idea of time and comparing it with the statement that the message reached Benteen after he joined Reno at 2.30. The Indians with Gall knew nothing of Benteen's command.

The position of Custer was not a commanding one. He was on the second ridge from the river; closer to the stream there was another ridge, somewhat lower, broken in spots, but interfering with a full view of the village. Custer must have been convinced that the village was clustered well around that portion which he saw, the lower end, and that Reno would make good his order to charge and thus throw the village into confusion; but he must have seen that no attempt was yet being made by the Indians to get away, and that out to the south and west the herd of ponies grazed undisturbed.

It was soon after Custer had left Reno that the Indians first caught sight of his column. He struck the ridge at a distance of about six miles from the lower end of the village, and was never out of sight of the Indians during the whole of the march to the end. Gall had all of his warriors massed at the lower end of the village, near the Cheyenne camp. The entire camp was engaged in watching the advance. Custer probably took the ridge as a means of announcing his coming and to divert attention from the attack of Reno. I have frequently traveled over the trail of Custer's march from the mouth of the Rosebud to the Little Big Horn battle-field, and am quite familiar with the country through which it passes, the distance being about one hundred miles, and have gone over the battle-field many times. The broken ground between the ridge and the river hid, as I have said, a great portion of the village. While the general and his squadron were as obvious to the Indians as though their band was in the lead playing Garryowen, — the battle-song of the Seventh Cavalry, — Reno's approach was entirely hidden. He could be discovered only when he was close enough to attack, and it is probably quite true that, as Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull says in her narration, the first knowledge the Indians had of the approach of Reno was when his rifle-shots rattled through the tepee poles of the Blackfeet. This exhibition of his column to the gaze of the Indians may have been an afterthought on the part of General Custer, for it does not appear that he expected Reno to strike the village as soon as he did. He probably meant, when he sent word to Reno to charge the village and the whole outfit would support him, that he would strike the other end at the same time. Immediately after sending the order he appeared on the ridge, expecting that Reno would ride into and through the practically unprotected upper end of the encampment, throwing the Indians into a panic, which would permit him to cross and attack from the lower end.

Gall divined what the plan was instantly when Reno began firing, before he was within striking distance. The Indians' ponies were in the best condition, and Gall took a considerable number of warriors through the village to the upper end, when word had been brought to him of the approach of another enemy. Crazy Horse and the great mass of the Indians were left near the Cheyenne camp. When Gall reached the upper end of the village, Reno had come to a pause. The few Indians who had opposed had practically stopped him. Gall's people turned his left flank, and instead of closing up and charging, Reno fell back to the fringe of timber, where he was practically out of the way of harm, and stood still. Gall told me that he was in a hurry to get back to the lower ford, but saw no way of pressing the fighting with Reno, considering his force, and that he would have been compelled to send for a larger force if Reno had not played his cards for him by starting the retreat to the river. Gall turned this retreat into a rout, doing what execution he could, and the cavalry went across the river under a fire that killed many without harming the enemy. Lieutenant McIntosh was killed at some distance from the river, in the retreat; Lieutenant Hodgson, who was wounded while crossing the river, saved himself from death at the time by clinging to the stirrup of a trooper, and reached shore only to be killed by an Indian bullet. Dr. De Wolf was killed while trying to climb a bluff near the river. Twenty-nine enlisted men were killed. No sooner was Reno's command driven across the river than Gall practically withdrew all of his people and rode at speed down through the village again. Some Indians remained to harass stragglers from the Reno command, but the principal body withdrew at once and spread the news through the village that the soldiers attacking at the upper end had all been killed. This is credited by some of the people to this day, who believe that Reno's command, holding the hill that night and the next day, was altogether another body of troops.

Gall said that when he reached the lower end of the village Custer was still some distance off; that his force was advancing irregularly, but the men did not straggle far. Perhaps Custer had come to understand the situation, — that Reno had been repulsed or had retreated, — in which event he undoubtedly looked for support from him from the rear. Possibly he believed at this time that Reno had made good his instructions and was charging the other end of the village. There is no doubt that he had observed much confusion in that part of the village into which he had been able to look. Assuredly he had heard the firing and had been speculating on the outcome. Whatever his attitude of mind, he did not waver in his advance. While his column was still silhouetted against the sky-line of the ridge, Crazy Horse with the Cheyennes crossed the river, and, under cover of the inner ridge, made their way into the ravine to the north and west of the ridge upon which Custer was advancing. Gall threw many of his people across the river, the Hunkpapas, Minniconjous, Oglalas, Sans Arcs, and Brules crossing in a swarm, some being sheltered from the sight of Custer by the lower ridge, others making their way around the ravine. They were all hidden from the view of the command. Holding steadily to what appeared to be his original plan of attack, Custer swung his troops to the left from the ridge, and turned down to the river. As the men rode down into the bottom, the Indians saw that they were apprehensive, but they did not falter and they were well down to the stream before the Sioux showed themselves on that shore. Of course, the lower end of the village had been in sight occasionally for some time, but it was unlikely that Custer could have known that the Indians had crossed the river to meet him.

With the first shot that was fired the truth undoubtedly dawned upon Custer and his people that they had met a formidable force. The Indians rose up in front of them, and in very considerable numbers, and went directly to the attack. The soldiers retreated instantly; the ridge behind and to the right of the troops — the extension of the elevation they had left to go into the bottoms — might afford the men a chance to defend themselves. The order to fall back was evidently given without hesitation, though it was apparent to the Indians that Custer was surprised, or as nearly taken by surprise as so alert an officer could be in going into that exposed position. The movement to the rear was executed with such precipitation as would be likely in a body confronted by an enemy showing great strength.

It may be as well to say here, that the military experts who have builded a strategical structure on the foundation afforded by the graves that mark the Custer battle-field, are wrong in their deductions when they give with elaboration the movements ordered by Custer after the first attack. There was no time for orders. Gall, Crow King, Black Moon, Crow, Bear's Cap, No Neck, and Kill Eagle — all of whom were in positions to see the entire field covered by Custer's force, and who corroborated each other unboastingly — have told me that from the time of the first attack until the last man of Custer's command died on the battle-field, not more time elapsed than would be necessary to walk from the spot where the conversation was held — at the Standing Rock agency office — to Antelope Creek, a mile distant. It might have been a half-hour altogether. Within that period all the defense possible was made, including the movement from the bottom to the height, which was much less than a mile.

In ordering the troops to fall back Custer did that which Gall had anticipated. While a considerable body of Indians followed and harassed the men in this movement, another even larger body was sent around the ravine to the rear of the position aimed at by Custer; and when the cavalrymen had attained the position from which the commander evidently thought he might hold the Indians, in the ultimate hope of succor from Reno or Benteen, the elevation was surrounded to the west and north, while a considerable mass of the Sioux were advancing on what might be called the front of Custer's position.

In this retreat from the river, which has not been figured upon by the military writers, except in denial, a dozen or more troopers were killed; their bodies were found at intervals along the line of the backward movement, as indicated by the marble slabs which mark the spot where each dead trooper was found.

When Custer reached the elevation, Keogh's and Calhoun's troops were halted and dismounted by command, or by the necessities of the action, and the horses left in the ravine. This gave these troops the left of the force when Custer had proceeded along the ridge and turned to face the Indians in sight on the ground covered in the retreat. Between Custer and Keogh, Smith's troop was extended in skirmish formation, a fact evidenced by the disposition of the bodies. Captain Tom Custer's and Captain Yates's troops, who fell in the group with General Custer, were farther along toward where the ridge ran out in a declivity which could not be easily negotiated by horsemen, and which made the command comparatively safe from attack from that direction. This, then, was the position at the finish. The line was not a lengthy one, and the men were thickest at about the point where Custer fell. While the troops were getting into this position, they were fighting continuously, but the onslaught of the Indians did not take on its deathly and irresistible form until Gall, in carrying his men around the ravine to the north and east of the position, struck the cavalry horses — probably those held by the men of Keogh's and Calhoun's commands. The shouting and shooting incident to the stampeding of the horses was the signal for the attack on the troops from three sides of the ridge.

The Indians rose up out of the ravine and rode at the devoted column. At this time Custer was well out to the right of the command. In his death he was surrounded by three people of his house, and two relations by marriage. When he died, and at what period of the fight, is not known. Whether or not he saw his brother, Captain Tom Custer, die first will never be known. He might have known that his brother-in-law, Lieutenant Calhoun, had been killed at once in Gall's wild charge after the horses were stampeded. But the General, Tom and Boston, his brothers, "Artie Ried," his nephew, Captain Yates, Lieutenant Cook, his adjutant, Captain Lord, of the medical corps, Lieutenant Reilly, Kellogg, of the "New York Herald," and many others, died very close together.

The Indians made no special attack on Custer or the people with him; they had not identified the general. They knew him as Long Hair, this being the distinguishing personal mark of the man in the eyes of the Sioux. At the time of the battle he wore his hair short, and there was nothing about him to distinguish him from the other officers, so far as the Indians were concerned.

The stand of the troopers was of the briefest duration. When Gall gave the signal, the Indians rose up out of the ravines: the Cheyennes, led by Crazy Horse, the Hunkpapas, the Blackfeet, — the latter few in numbers, — the Minniconjous, with Lame Deer and Hump in the van, the Oglalas, with Big Road, the Sans Arcs and the Brules; they came straight at the ridge, riding fiercely and swiftly, stayed by nothing, a red tide of death; and almost without pause they rode over the field, and the desperate shooting of the white men did not halt them for a moment. When the tide had passed, Custer and his men were reckoned with the dead. There was neither time nor opportunity for defense; personal gallantry and the desperate occasion may have given birth to heroes in that moment, but they died in the instant of their birth, and Custer's last stand was a bloody page in history.

Out to the north and east three men had sought safety only to be shot down. The rest of the command, with the exception of Sergeant Butler, — whose body was found at some distance over toward Reno Hill, — died as they stood. Butler may have been engaged in trying to communicate with Reno, or he may have been trying to get through the line of red braves. About his body were many empty cartridge-shells, showing that he made a gallant defense at the last.

The Indians participating in that affair have always asserted, and still maintain with decided positiveness, that the fight was of short duration and the Indian loss insignificant; that the attack of the overwhelming number of Indians — enthused by their easy victory over Reno — was of such whirlwind force that the small groups of soldiers did not check the rush of their wild charge. The Indians claim that many of the soldiers were killed without being shot, some who were mounted being pulled off their horses and clubbed to death with stone-headed war-clubs, which most of the Indians carried in addition to their Winchesters. They also claim that the soldiers might as well have had their pockets full of stones to throw at the Indians in defending themselves, as the carbines and revolvers with which they were armed, they having no opportunity to use their firearms after the first volley; and this statement of the Indians would appear to be borne out, in part at least, by the fact that some of the dead, when found by the burial detachment, were without gunshot wounds, and others with only slight flesh wounds, but all with their skulls broken in by blows inflicted with some blunt instrument.

Gall told me that he would have gone at once to the attack of Reno when the fight on Custer Hill was over, if he could have controlled his warriors. As well try to stem the flood of the mighty Mississippi, he said, as to hold the wildly excited hundreds who dashed about on the ridge among the bodies of the slain. Some scores of horses that had lately been ridden by the white men, the most valuable booty for an Indian, were galloping about the country. These were spoil for the warriors, and they turned their attention at once to their capture. As the men left the field, the women and boys came on. The women carried stone clubs, little hatchets and knives; the Sioux had no tomahawks. The ferocity with which they attacked the bodies of the dead makes a horrid detail of the affair that has been told more than once. Even the Indian boys rode or walked about over the field, shooting into the bodies of the slain — which would account for the firing heard continuously by the soldiers on Reno Hill long after all resistance had ceased on the part of Custer's people. The head men sought for Custer's body. They knew him only by his long hair, and they could find no body that might possibly be identified in that way.

Custer wore his campaign dress of buckskin, and the usual insignia of his rank were missing. They found a man dressed in buckskin, and in the pockets of the blouse they found parchment maps, from which they concluded that the body was that of the officer in command; and their respect for the chief — always marked with the Sioux — impelled them to hold the body inviolate. The body was that of Custer, and it was not mutilated. The Indians insisted, in conversation with me, that many of the bodies were not mutilated; that the wounds found were inflicted in the heat of battle. But they all knew that Custer and Keogh escaped the general fate of the fallen. Keogh escaped mutilation because he wore about his neck an Agnus Dei, an emblem of faith frequently worn by Catholics. In stripping the body the Indians found the Agnus Dei, and, regarding it as powerful medicine, they refrained from desecrating the body of the man who wore it. The uniforms were all stripped from the soldiers, and besides the booty taken in the form of arms and clothing, much money was got. The soldiers had been paid just before starting on the fatal expedition, and all, or nearly all, had money. Many of the Indians did not know the value of the currency, but it was soon appropriated by those who knew its purchasing power.

As soon as possible after the fight, Gall led his people away from the field and rode up the river to the position which had been held in absolute safety by Reno, while Custer's command was being wiped out of existence. I have been assured by many credible people among the Sioux that for at least an hour there was not an Indian left in front of Reno's position; that he might have marched out uninterrupted.

Benteen joined Reno about or just about 2.30, no doubt. The military writers have covered the events that took place within Reno's lines that afternoon, and the Indians as a whole could know nothing of what was going on there for some time, for they withdrew to go after what they considered bigger game, the cavalry horses. Gall seemed to have no apprehension of a renewal of the attack on the upper end of the village. He had no very well-defined idea what had become of the force he had repulsed and driven across the Little Big Horn, except that it was on the hill. He knew positively that no part of this force had joined the troops he attacked on the ridge. He might have anticipated that this force would advance to the attack after the Custer command had been annihilated. In any event, he was anxious to get his people up to the attack and meet the other command. He and the other Indians knew that the command which had been repulsed and driven to the hill had been badly whipped; the Indians in the village believed that the troops had been destroyed utterly. Gall hurried, with all the men he could control, from the Custer field of carnage to finish his awful work of destruction, believing that the annihilation of the troops on Reno Hill would be an easy task. From the time the Indians disappeared from in front of the Reno position until they returned in force, an hour and a half or two hours had elapsed. During that time, or almost all of it, the troops on the hill could hear firing: first the firing incident to the engagement between the Indians and Custer, and later the straggling shooting of the dead by Indians and boys on the field. The officers with Reno were anxious to get out and see what had become of Custer. They were not careful about talking of the necessity for doing something. Captain Weir and Lieutenant Edgerly of "D" troop, the latter now a brigadier general, had made an attempt to get out nearer to the position they supposed was held by Custer, but they were repulsed.

Custer's force was destroyed about three o'clock. It was after four when Gall got his warriors started up the river to attack the Reno position, and it was nearly five when Major Reno ordered his force to move down toward the Custer position. They had not gone far when the Sioux came up to the attack. The troops had attained the high bluffs down the river from the original position when the Indians came into collision with them. French's and Weir's troops stood the brunt of the attack; Godfrey had got into action. They all supposed it was the intention to occupy and control the heights, when they received word to fall back. The main command was already in retreat to the old position. The advanced troops got away with difficulty and the Indians occupied the heights. Gall, seeing that the troops were wholly on the hill, sent his Indians around to the rear and surrounded the command. All of the high points were occupied by the Indians and the command seemed to be doomed. There were Indians everywhere and they had secured a number of commanding positions from which they might — if they could have been held to the work — have destroyed Reno's force.

But after seven o'clock the warriors began to leave. They were excited with the bloody work of the afternoon. They wanted to have a part in the carousing that would take place in the village. The event was too big an affair for an Indian to forego his share in the general rejoicing for the mere sake of getting more scalps. By dark, only the more persistent of the Sioux were left in the positions they had taken. Reno's outfit might have moved out without interference, but it might not have found so easily defensible a position after moving. Moreover, there was the doubt as to what had become of Custer. The Indians thought that the white men on the hill knew that the other command had been destroyed. They did not then and do not yet understand why Reno took to the hill in the first place or remained there so long afterwards. Gall said frankly that, if Reno had persisted in his attack upon the upper end of the village in the morning, without dismounting his men, the event might have been different. If his attack, which was sudden, had been persevering, it would have kept the Indians busy trying to hold him in check, and Custer could then have attacked the lower end of the camp with only half the Indians to oppose him; the village would have been thrown into confusion, and the outcome of the affair doubtful.

While the troops on the hill lay expecting the worst, not knowing what had become of their commander and ignorant of the strength of the dusky foes with whom they peopled the adjacent heights, the Indians were, as told me by the leaders, holding high carnival in the village. Throughout the length of the encampment fires had been built; each band had its own dance, but the warriors did not remain in their own bands, — they fraternized with others, going from dance to dance, recounting their exploits, and being hailed in proportion to the prominence they had won in the battle. They were drunken with blood and elated beyond any sort of limit. The shouts and whoops of the dancers were carried on the night wind to the men on the hill, and they carried the discomforting suggestion that on the next night their annihilation might give occasion for another orgy.

The Indians slept no more that night than the white men; there was no council, but the war-chiefs prevailed on the warriors to return to the beleaguering of the troops on the hill, and before daylight the Indians were again firing into the position.

The troops had dug trenches during the night, and the packs and dead horses were utilized for shelter. The Indian fire did very little execution, it appears, and there was little heart in the attack. The troops had been without water, except what they carried with them, up to the morning, and the Indians made it impossible for the men to get their canteens filled. Some few of the soldiers defied the hazard and got some water, but very little.

Gall had sent out scouts, and the report had been brought in that the walking soldiers were coming. The report spread something very like consternation in the Indian camp, and preparations were made for getting away. The infantry inspired much more awe in the Sioux than the cavalry did, and neither Sitting Bull nor Gall nor any of the war-chiefs were inclined to give battle to the united forces they knew to be in the field.

About noon the Indians got ready to break camp; but this was done leisurely, and there were some differences of opinion as to what should be done about continuing the attack against the force on the hill. The independence of control of the warriors settled the matter, and no demonstration was made in force.

At one time when the Indians were pressing the command threateningly, Benteen induced Reno to let him make a charge. It was attempted, but the fire of the Indians, from cover, was so heavy that the troops were forced to retreat. Soon after noon the Indians drew off; then, inspired by the spirit of some of the chiefs, they returned and poured a vicious fire into the trenches on the hill. Then they left, and after three o'clock none returned. Two hours before dark the Indians got under way. It was known to them that the fresh troops — Terry with Gibbon's command — would arrive, and the immense herds of ponies could only be moved slowly. They went reluctantly, but by sunset the camp was deserted, the Indians moving off to the west, and the affair on the Little Big Horn was a thing of the past.

On and about the ridge where Custer made his last stand, two hundred and twelve of the flower of the Seventh Cavalry lay dead and unburied. Altogether two hundred and sixty-five of the original men of the command were killed; fifty-two were wounded. The Indians lost twenty-two dead and many — how many no man knows — wounded. The dead and wounded were all carried away, with the exception of one Indian who fell into the hands of Benteen's men, being killed in an impudent attempt to count a coup on a soldier who had been shot almost within the cavalry's lines.

And this is the story of the battle of the Little Big Horn. For many moons the story of that day, recounted by the warriors who had a part in it, bolstered the fading hopes of the Indians, who in scattered and starving bands sought to avoid the inevitable capitulation to the white soldiers, who pursued them from that day in June until the last of them surrendered. For long it kept alive the influence of Sitting Bull. For years after the Indians had laid down their arms it was talked about around the camp-fires of the bands that had nothing left of the old life but the memory of the day when last the power of the Sioux nation was arrayed in its great strength and in successful opposition to the march of the white man.

On Inauguration Day, March 4, 1905, I was in Washington and viewed the great parade from a position close to that occupied by a squadron of the Seventh Cavalry. When the Indian cadets from Carlisle marched past the position of the Seventh, the school band struck up the stirring strain of Garryowen, the tune played by Custer's old band when the Seventh went into battle. Among the Carlisle students were boys whose fathers had been in the forefront of the red swarm that came up out of the ravine and overwhelmed Custer that day in June of the centennial year. I thought of Custer's command, of the peaceful country about the Crow agency, and the line of railroad that stands a monument to the indisputable domination of the white man, and I was profoundly impressed by a sense of the fact that the men, red and white, who made history in the days when there was a frontier in this country had given way to another and happier people, living in better and happier times.

AN INDIAN DANDY

Young Crow making his toilet for the dance

CHAPTER X

MRS. SPOTTED HORN BULL'S VIEW OF THE CUSTER TRAGEDY

The Story of the Last Stand of Custer and his Men, as told by the Widow of a Chief of the Hunkpapa Sioux.

In the first place Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull was there — which is more than can be said for some of the other ladies and gentlemen who have told of the events of that dreadful day when Custer led his gallant fellows into the jaws of death and worse. She was not then carried on the rolls of the Indian Department as Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull. A more imaginative sponsor than the Indian Agent had given her the more euphonious and, let us hope, more correctly descriptive appellation of Pte-San-Waste-Win. Twenty-eight years ago, when she first came to the agency at Standing Rock, when Spotted Horn Bull, who was killed with Sitting Bull, was still in the land of the living Dakotas, she was a strikingly good-looking Indian woman, and much esteemed by her neighbors for her intelligence and capacity. She had also the gift of eloquence, rare in an Indian woman, and a fluency in language and readiness of gesture which placed her high in the esteem of her story-loving tribesmen.

And many a big man among the Sioux had been content to hold his peace when Pte-San-Waste-Win raised her voice. Not that the voice was raucous or that Beautiful White Cow (the English rendition of her name) was a scold. I have heard a story that she on one occasion man-handled a big chief of the Sioux nation who she learned had maligned her, and that the man-handling followed his remark: "Woman, be silent; you have the mouth of a white man." And knowing Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull as I do, I have never doubted the verity of the incident so far as her attack was concerned.

She is now a sturdy, upstanding woman of sixty to sixty-five years of age, born of the Hunkpapa Sioux, a band that has provided the nation with many of its noted men. She was handsome, according to the Indian canons of taste, in her youth, and indeed I am not sure that the Indian taste in these matters might not well be accepted by some more advanced peoples. She was married in early youth to Spotted Horn Bull, a chief of his band and a man of prominence as a warrior and adviser, but no orator. She appears to have brought to the family the attributes in which her husband was lacking, for she sat in the council of the tribe — and I know of no other Indian woman of her nation who was so signally honored. Her voice was always listened to, for, in addition to her gift of eloquence, she was a clear thinker, and could make effective the ideas of her silent husband. Since she became a widow, and the Sioux no longer hold councils, her neighbors seek her advice in business matters. She has steadfastly refused to accept Christianity, though she has listened to all the arguments that have been made to her. She elects to cling to the beliefs of her fathers, — a fact that does not at all detract from the esteem in which the missionaries hold her.

A few months ago I met Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull by appointment at my son Harry's trading store, located at Oak Creek, on the Standing Rock Indian reservation. She had come in fifteen miles from her home on the Missouri River, near the mouth of Oak Creek, for the meeting. I was accompanied by a friend, and she greeted us with the effusive welcome of her people — as different as possible in its warmth and volubility from the greeting one not acquainted intimately with the Sioux might expect. She was a striking figure as she stood up to greet us.

This historian and poetess of the Sioux wore the ordinary costume of a woman of her people, but her gingham dress was of the Campbell plaid, her shawl-blanket of native make, her moccassins neat, her jetty hair falling in two braids on each side of a smiling and expressive countenance. She looked a much younger woman than she really was — and by way of demonstrating that she still felt young, she danced a few steps, laughingly declaring that she had met and danced with many prominent people. It was after a substantial supper, to which Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull did full justice, that we sat down in my son's little parlor and listened to her story of the affair on the little Big Horn.

I have always deplored the fact that English writers have never been able to render in their native elegance and appositeness the similes used by Indian orators and story-tellers. I now deplore the lack of that same capacity in myself. Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull exhausted the stores of her flowery vocabulary in the relation we listened to. She talked with great fluency, her voice pitched to a sort of breathless stage of excited feeling. I remember hearing a young woman declaim the Chorus in "Henry V," put on by an American actor-manager a few years ago; the Sioux story-teller reminded me of the actress. She illustrated her every sentence in pantomime, and when she feared that she had not pictured the scene her memory brought up, she seized a pencil and paper and drew a sketch of the valley of the Little Big Horn, showing the location of the Indian village on the west bank, the distribution of the bands of the Sioux, the points of attack by Custer and Reno, and the fatal hill, now marked by a monument, where Custer fell. This sketch she used constantly to explain her meaning, and she was perfectly frank about the occurrences of June 25, 1876, except on one point. She ignored all questions as to the whereabouts of Sitting Bull during the fight. Skillfully avoiding the interrogation, or totally ignoring it, she made many excursions into Sioux history of that time; but Sitting Bull, her kinsman, who skulked in the hills while his people were carrying out the annihilation of the troops, she would not speak of. Once, exasperated by the questions of the third party to the hearing, she asked if he was a lawyer, and, being assured that he was not, she shook hands with him very solemnly and continued her relation. And this is the tale she told: —

"My brother, White Eyebrows, had been to a dance. All through the night he had been making glad the hearts of the maidens, for my brother was good to look upon and the women of the Hunkpapa know a good man. All the night he had danced with the other young people. It was not a war dance, but just a merry-making of the younger people. A few days previous, our men had fought with the Crows and

Shoshones [General Crook's allies] and the enemies of my people had fallen as leaves when they turn yellow. We were not harmed, and there was no mourning in the village of the Sioux on the plateau beside the Greasy Grass, the river that the white men call the Little Big Horn. When my brother came to my tepee from the dance, I still slept. Late the night before I and the other women of the Hunkpapa had labored to make ready for the march that we were to take up that morning. Where we were going, I know not. Where the men of the Sioux go, there go the women; it is their duty and their pleasure. Our people were roaming through the country that had been given them before the coming of the whites. The country was good; there was rich grass for the ponies, and sweet water; the fields glowed with prairie flowers of yellow and red and blue; there were buffaloes in the valleys and Indian turnips on the hills for the digging. We were rich in provisions, and no man had a right to put out his hand and tell us that we should not roam. The village by the Greasy Grass was but the stopping-place for a day or two, and we had no thought of a fight with the white man. The Crows and Shoshones we had no fears of, for the lodges of the Sioux were many and their men brave as the lion of the mountains. But we were to move out to the northwest, and I had made many bundles of my store. Thus it was that I lay sleeping when my brother came to the tepee in the dawn and asked for food.

"I unpacked some of the bundles and prepared his breakfast, buffalo meat stewed with turnips, and set it before him; and as he ate, the people of the village awakened and the sun rose higher. I have said that our lodges were many, but how many people there were, I know not. [There were about ten thousand Indians, including women and children, in the village.] But the women were all at work, and the ponies were being rounded up and preparations for leaving went on, that we might be away before the heat of the day became great, as it sometimes is in the country of my people and in the valleys near the big hills.

"The village was made along the Greasy Grass and between that river and the Big Horn, which flows north to the Yellowstone. The Blackfeet, who were not many, had the place at the south end of the village; next to the Blackfeet and closer to the river were my people, the Hunkpapa; down the river and next to the Hunkpapa were the Minniconjou; and below them the Sans Arc. Behind the Hunkpapa, away from the river, were the Oglala and the Brule; and below the Minniconjou to the north were the Cheyennes. Up the river from the village of the Blackfeet there was thick timber, and through this we could not see.

"I have seen my people prepare for battle many times, and this I know: that the Sioux that morning had no thought of fighting. We expected no attack, and our young men did not watch for the coming of Long Hair [Custer] and his soldiers.

"Most of the women were occupied in packing their stores preparatory to breaking camp, and some of them were working along the bank of the river. On the east side of the river an old man had shot a buffalo that morning, and near where the buffalo lay dead some women and children were digging Indian turnips. These people first saw the soldiers, who then were far to the east. They were on the little hills between the Greasy Grass and the Rosebud Rivers. They were six to eight miles distant when first seen, and some of the younger people hurried in from the place where the buffalo was killed to notify the camp. We could see the flashing of their sabres and saw that there were very many soldiers in the party. My people went on with their work, making ready to move across the Big Horn, but the tepees were not yet down. The men of the Sioux were much excited, and they watched the coming of Long Hair and hurried the women. The village was not made for a fight and they would move on. We had seen the soldiers marching along the high ridge on the east side of the river and were watching them, but had not seen these others approaching."

Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull halted in her story, and thought for a few moments. Then she struck her hands sharply together to imitate the rattling of carbine fire and continued: —

"Like that the soldiers were upon us. Through the tepee poles their bullets rattled. The sun was several hours high and the tepees were empty. Bullets coming from a strip of timber on the west bank of the Greasy Grass passed through the tepees of the Blackfeet and Hunkpapa. The broken character of the country across the river, together with the fringe of trees on the west side, where our camp was situated, had hidden the advance of a great number of soldiers, which we had not seen until they were close upon us and shooting into our end of the village, where, from seeing the direction taken by the soldiers we were watching, we felt comparatively secure.

"The women and children cried, fearing they would be killed, but the men, the Hunkpapa and Blackfeet, the Oglala and Minniconjou, mounted their horses and raced to the Blackfeet tepees. We could still see the soldiers of Long Hair marching along in the distance, and our men, taken by surprise, and from a point whence they had not expected to be attacked, went singing the song of battle into the fight behind the Blackfeet village. And we women wailed over the children, for we believed that the Great Father had sent all his men for the destruction of the Sioux. Some of the women put loads on the travois and would have left, but that their husbands and sons were in the fight. Others tore their hair and wept for the fate that they thought was to be the portion of the Sioux, through the anger of the Great Father, but the men were not afraid, and they had many guns and cartridges. Like the fire that, driven by a great wind, sweeps through the heavy grass-land where the buffalo range, the men of the Hunkpapa, the Blackfeet, the Oglala, and the Minniconjou rushed through the village and into the trees, where the soldiers of the white chief had stopped to fire. The soldiers [Reno's] had been sent by Long Hair to surprise the village of my people. Silently had they moved off around the hills, and keeping out of sight of the young men of our people, had crept in, south of what men now call Reno Hill; they had crossed the Greasy Grass and climbed the bench from the bank. The way from the river to the plateau upon which our tepees stood was level, but the soldiers were on foot when they came in sight of the Blackfeet. Then it was that they fired and warned us of their approach."

Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull stopped an instant, and then said: —

"If the soldiers had not fired until all of them were ready for the attack; if they had brought their horses and rode into the camp of the Sioux, the power of the Dakota nation might have been broken, and our young men killed in the surprise, for they were watching Long Hair only and had no thought of an attack anywhere while they could see his soldiers traveling along parallel with the river on the opposite side, and more than a rifle-shot back from the river. Long Hair had planned cunningly that Reno should attack in the rear while he rode down and gave battle from the front of the village looking on the river. But the Great Spirit was watching over his red children. He allowed the white chief [Reno] to strike too soon, and the braves of the Sioux ran over his soldiers and beat them down as corn before the hail. They fought a few minutes, and the men of the Hunkpapa, the Blackfeet, Oglala, and the Minniconjou bore them down and slew many of them — all who did not get across the river were killed. And Long Hair was still three miles away when nearly all of the blue coats that came to kill the Sioux, at our end of the village, were dead; only those escaped who were mounted on horses and got across the river. Those who crossed the river got on a high hill to the east, where our young men did not attack them further until after Custer and his men were killed. Two score of the bluecoats lay dead on the field, and our people took their guns and many cartridges, and the mourning was in the houses afar off where the women of the white braves waited to hear of the victory they expected their young men to win.

"The shadow of the sun had not moved the width of a tepee pole's length from the beginning to the ending of the first fight; and while it was going on, the old man who had shot the buffalo east of the river, and some of the women and children who had been digging Indian turnips, and were cut off by the approach of Reno's men, came to the camp. They had seen the soldiers of Long Hair, and had heard the firing of Reno's men, and had secreted themselves in the timber along the river until the guns no longer spoke.

"Down the Greasy Grass River, three or four miles from where Reno's men had crossed the river, and over across from the camps of the Cheyennes and the Sans Arc, there is an easy crossing of the Greasy Grass. The crossing is near a butte, and around the butte there runs a deep ravine. From Long Hair's movements the Sioux warriors knew that he had planned to strike the camp of my people from the lower end as Reno struck it from the upper end. Even the women, who knew nothing of warfare, saw that Reno had struck too early, and the warriors who were generals in planning, even as Long Hair was, knew that the white chief would attempt to carry out his plan of the attack, believing that Reno had beaten our young men. There was wild disorder in our camp, the old women and children shrieked and got in the way of the warriors, and the women were ordered back out of the village, so that they might not be in the way of our soldiers. And our men went singing down the river, confident that the enemy would be defeated, even as we believed that all of Reno's men had been killed. And I wept with the women for the brave dead and exulted that our braves should gain a great victory over the whites led by Long Hair, who was the greatest of their chiefs, and whose soldiers could then be plainly seen across the river. From a hill behind the camp, at first, and then from the bank of the river, I watched the men of our people plan to overthrow the soldiers of the Great Father; and before a shot was fired, I knew that no man who rode with Long Hair would go back to tell the tale of the fight that would begin when the soldiers approached the river at the lower end of the village."

The story-teller paused and was then asked the question: "Where was Sitting Bull during the fight?" She went on as though she had not heard the question.

"From across the river I could hear the music of the bugle and could see the column of soldiers turn to the left, to march down to the river to where the attack was to be made. All I could see was the warriors of my people. They rushed like the wind through the village, going down the ravine as the women went out to the grazing-ground to round up the ponies. It was done very quickly. There had been no council the night before — there was no need for one; nor had there been a scalp-dance: nothing but the merry-making of the young men and the maidens. When we did not know there was to be a fight, we could not be prepared for it. And our camp was not pitched anticipating a battle. The warriors would not have picked out such a place for a fight with white men, open to attack from both ends and from the west side. No; what was done that day was done while the sun stood still and the white men were delivered into the hands of the Sioux. But no plan was necessary.

"Our chiefs and the young men rode quickly down to the end of the village, opposite to the hill upon which there now stands the great stone put up by the whites where Long Hair fell. Between that hill and the soldiers was a ravine which started from the river opposite the camp of the Sans Arc, and ran all the way around the butte. To get to the butte Long Hair must cross the ravine; but from where he was marching with his soldiers, he could not see into the ravine nor down to the banks of the river. The warriors of my people, of all the bands, the Sans Arc, the Cheyenne, the Brule, the Minniconjou, the Oglala, the Blackfeet, all had joined with the Hunkpapa on our side of the Greasy Grass and opposite the opening into the ravine. Soon I saw a number of Cheyennes ride into the river, then some young men of my band, then others, until there were hundreds of warriors in the river and running up into the ravine. When some hundreds had passed the river and gone into the ravine, the others who were left, still a very great number, moved back from the river and waited for the attack. And I knew that the fighting men of the Sioux, many hundreds in number, were hidden in the ravine behind the hill upon which Long Hair was marching, and he would be attacked from both sides. And my heart was sad for the soldiers of Long Hair, though they sought the lives of our men; but I was a woman of the Sioux, and my husband, my uncles, and cousins, and brothers, all taking part in the battle, were men who could fight and plan, and I was satisfied.

"Pizi [Gall] and many of his young men had recrossed the Greasy Grass River after the white men had been driven off or killed in the earlier engagement at the upper end of the village, where he with some of our warriors had been shooting at the soldiers, who were chased to the hill, and the soldiers had been shooting at them, but could not hit the Sioux. When Pizi [Gall] recrossed the river, many women followed his party, and we heard him tell his men to frighten the horses of the soldiers, which were held in small bunches. With shoutings that we could hear across the river, the young men stampeded the horses and the women captured them and brought them to the village. The Indians fought the soldiers with bullets taken from the first party that attacked their village, and many rode the horses captured from the white men, who had fled to the hill. To the northwest a great many women and children were driving in the ponies of the Sioux, but I remained with many other women along the bank of Greasy Grass River. I saw Crazy Horse lead the Cheyennes into the water and up the ravine; Crow King and the Hunkpapa went after them; and then Gall, who had led his young men and killed the soldiers he had been fighting farther up the river, rode along the bench by the river to where Long Hair had stopped with his men.

"I cannot remember the time. When men fight and the air is filled with bullets, when the screaming of horses that are shot drowns the war-whoop of the warriors, a woman whose husband and brothers are in the battle does not think of the time. But the sun was no longer overhead when the war-whoop of the Sioux sounded from the river-bottom and the ravine surrounding the hill at the end of the ridge where Long Hair had taken his last stand. The river was in sight from the butte, and while the whoop still rung in our ears and the women were shrieking, two Cheyennes tried to cross the river and one of them was shot and killed by Long Hair's men. Then the men of the Sioux nation, led by Crow King, Hump, Crazy Horse, and many great chiefs, rose up on all sides of the hill, and the last we could see from our side of the river was a great number of gray horses. The smoke of the shooting and the dust of the horses shut out the hill, and the soldiers fired many shots, but the Sioux shot straight and the soldiers fell dead. The women crossed the river after the men of our village, and when we came to the hill there were no soldiers living and Long Hair lay dead among the rest. There were more than two hundred dead soldiers on the hill, and the boys of the village shot many who were already dead, for the blood of the people was hot and their hearts bad, and they took no prisoners that day."

The woman sat playing with the edge of her blanket. Of the dreadful things that took place on the hill after the command of the unfortunate Custer had been annihilated, she would, of course, say nothing. The women of her nation finished the work of the warriors on that awful field.

I asked her if there was any more fighting.

"Not much. The men on the hill [Reno's] were safe to stay there until they wanted water. Gall kept his men along the river. Some of the soldiers were shot as they tried to reach the water. There was some fighting too, but none of our young men were killed.

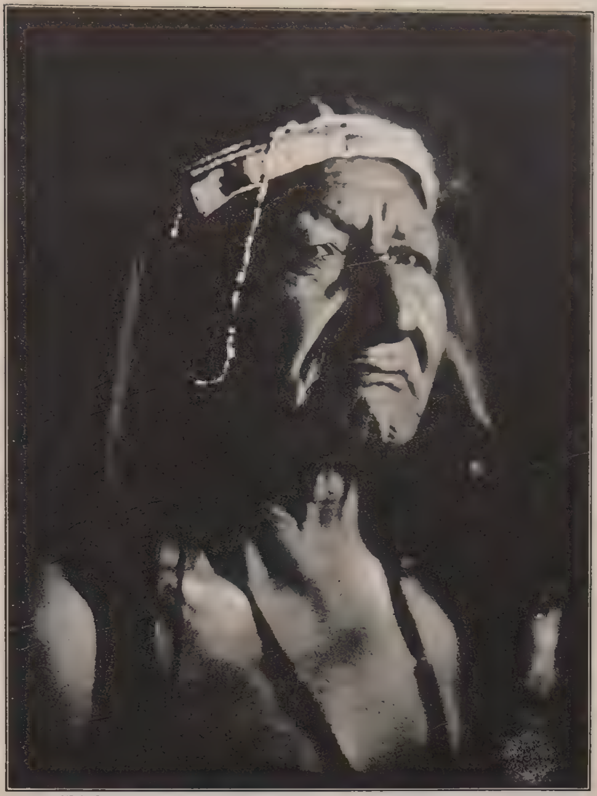
"That night the Sioux, men, women, and children, lighted many fires and danced; their hearts were glad, for the Great Spirit had given them a great victory. All along the valley of the Greasy Grass, fires were lighted, and the women laughed as they labored hard to bring in the fuel; for in the darkness they could see the gleam of the flames on the arms of the soldiers fastened in a trap on Reno Hill. The people had taken many guns, cartridges, horses, and much clothing from the soldiers, and they rejoiced while the fires lit up the field on the hill across the river, where the naked bodies of the soldiers lay. We had much money, but did not know at the time what its real value was, and a lot of green-paper money was kept in my tepee for some time before being disposed of. All night the people danced and sang their songs of victory, and they were strong in their might and would have attacked the soldiers who lay through the night on what you call Reno Hill, but Gall and Crow King and Crazy Horse would waste no lives of the Sioux braves. They said: 'We will shoot at them occasionally, but not charge. They will fall into our hands when the thirst burns in their throats and makes them mad for drink.'

"This was the counsel of the chiefs, and the young men saw that it was good; so while many feasted, a few held the hill and the soldiers did not know it, for of those who stole to the river to drink, none went back alive. There was fighting the next day, but the Sioux knew early in the day that many soldiers were coming up from the north, and preparations were made to leave for new hunting-grounds. And while our hearts were singing for the victory our braves had won, there were wailing women in the village, for they had their dead. Since the Sioux first fought the men who are our friends now, they had not won so great a battle and at so little cost. Twenty-two dead were counted, and the price was not great; but what wife, or mother, or sister gives thought to victory when she finds her dead on the field? So it was that in the midst of the rejoicing, there was sorrowing among the women, who would not be comforted in knowing that their dead had gone to join the ghosts of the brave. The dead we took with us, laid on travois, and carried for many days, for among the white men were Crow and Shoshone scouts, who would desecrate our dead, and we would have no Sioux scalps dangling at their tepee-poles.

"So we went out from Greasy Grass River, and left Long Hair and his dead to their friends. The people scattered and the pursuit did not harm us. But I still remember the bitterness of the suffering of the Sioux that winter, after we had met and talked with Bear Coat [General Miles] on the Yellowstone, when we were on our way north into the land of the Red Coats, where we remained five winters, and were frequently very destitute, while we remained there.

"So it was that the Sioux defeated Long Hair and his soldiers in the valley of the Greasy Grass River, which my people remember with regret, but without shame. We are now living happily and in friendship with the whites, knowing that their hearts are good toward us. The great chiefs who led that fight are dead: Gall, Crow King, Crazy Horse, Big Road, and the other head men are dead and gone to the land of ghosts, but their deeds live, and we of the Sioux nation keep them in our memories, even as we keep in remembrance Long Hair and his men, whose bravery in battle makes the bravery of their conquerors a thing that cannot be buried in the grave nor forgotten, because their ghosts are at peace."

And Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull put the corner of her shawl to her face and wiped away a tear, forced perhaps by the thought that the husband of her youth, whom she has not forgotten, — though she has had many offers from chief men of her people, — was with the ghosts of those others who fought with and against him on that June day, thirty-three years ago, in the valley of the Little Big Horn.



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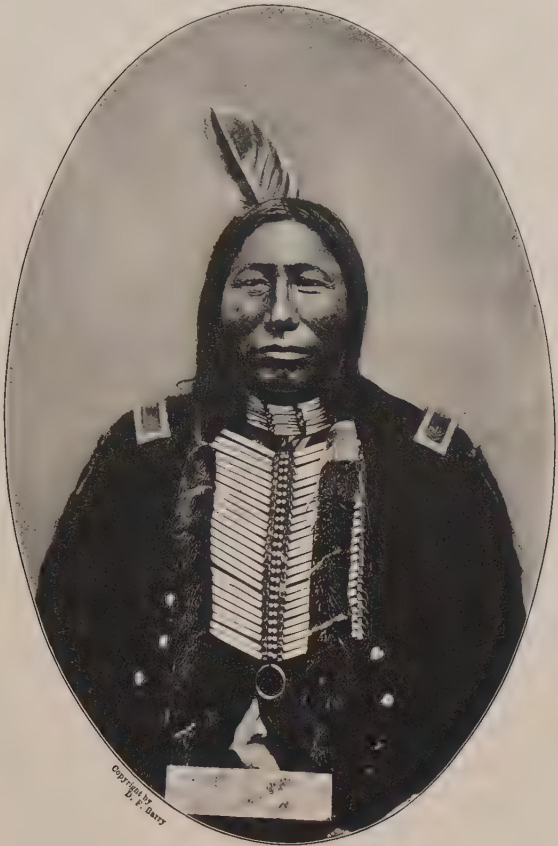
TWO MOONS, NORTHERN CHEYENNE CHIEF



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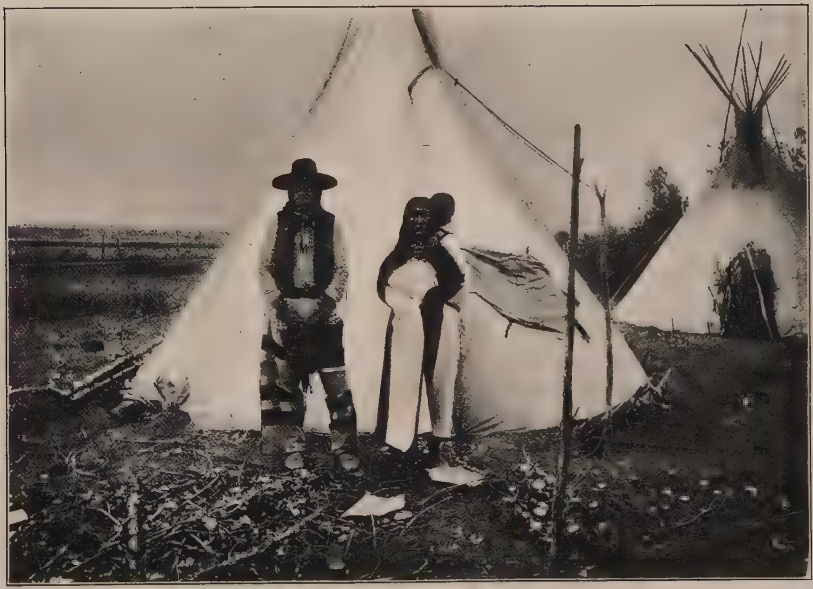
CROW KING



CURLY, A SURVIVOR OF THE CUSTER COMMAND IN THE LITTLE BIG HORN FIGHT, WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILD

CHAPTER XI

WHEN SITTING BULL'S MEDICINE FAILED

The Message that Kicking Bear carried to the Sioux Chief and that led to the Death of Sitting Bull.

I STOOD by the grave of Sitting Bull one Sunday evening a few months ago. The mound under which is buried the body of the medicine man is in the extreme northwest corner of the Fort Yates military cemetery, adjoining the Standing Rock Agency, North Dakota. It is marked with the stenciled inscription, in black on a white board: —

SITTING BULL

DIED

December 15, 1890.

There was no other grave within thirty yards. A profound peace lay upon the place. Far up toward the agency school a number of Indian boys played croquet; a phonograph in the Indian police-headquarters was working, — as it is most of the time, — and oddly enough it was reproducing "Taps" from a bugler's record. Two hundred yards east of the grave of Sitting Bull the deserted barracks of Fort Yates afforded a dismal playground for the children of the agency employees, and their voices came faintly down to the cemetery; in the northwest the sun was dropping out of sight behind the buttes. A more lovely landscape, a scene more replete with the suggestion of a holy peace, could not be imagined; and there at my feet lay, stilled forever, the form which had been the tenement of the turbulent spirit of Sitting Bull, who had striven all his life to bar the progress of the white man, who made the setting for this all-pervading peace, while a few rods away stood the dismantled fort built to hold that spirit in check. The deserted fort and the dead hostile spoke to me of the passing of the day of the Indian, and as the peal of the vesper bell floated down from the mission chapel on the hill, I was minded to tell the story of the death of Sitting Bull.

Crafty, avaricious, mendacious, and ambitious, Sitting Bull possessed all of the faults of an Indian and none of the nobler attributes which have gone far to redeem some of his people from their deeds of guilt. He had no single quality that would serve to draw his people to him, yet he was by far the most influential man of his nation for many years, — neither Gall, Spotted Tail, nor Red Cloud, all greater men in every sense, exerting the power he did. I never knew him to display a single trait that might command admiration or respect, and I knew him well in the later years of his life. But he maintained his prestige by the acuteness of his mind and his knowledge of human nature. Even his people knew him as a physical coward, but the fact did not handicap the man in dealing with his following. He had many defenders at all times, and his medicine was good down to the end.

He was not a hereditary chief, nor even a chief by election or choice. He was born in 1834 on the Grand River, South Dakota, within twenty miles of the scene of his death. His father's name was Sitting Bull, and the son was called, as a boy, Jumping Badger. I had his history from his own lips when he returned, in May, 1883, from his imprisonment at Fort Randall, where he was held after his surrender in 1881. He got his name and made his first entrance into the public life of his band — the Hunkpapa — by the use of that intelligence which he displayed through life.

As a boy of fourteen, he told me, — and the facts were well known to the people, — that he accompanied his father and their tribesmen on one occasion when the Sioux took the war-path against the Crows. In a battle a Crow warrior was killed. Jumping Badger did not kill the man, but he counted the coup, — touched the body first after death, — and established his right to be regarded as the slayer. Upon the return of this war-party to the village, Jumping Badger's father made a feast, gave away a great many ponies, and announced that his son had won the right to wear his father's name and should thenceforth be known as Sitting Bull — in which the old man made provision beyond his knowing for the perpetuation of the name. His accuracy of judgment, knowledge of men, a student-like disposition to observe natural phenomena, and a deep insight into affairs among Indians and such white people as he came into contact with, made his stock in trade, and he made "good medicine." He made a pretence at mysticism that was easily sustained among his people, and long before the Custer affair he had a high standing among the common people and was too high to be injured by the contempt of the war-chiefs.

There is no doubt that his medicine was good in the Custer affair. He foretold with great accuracy the battle and the event, and the mere fact that he took to the hills, there to make medicine, while the fight was in progress, did not affect his standing adversely. He came out of the affair with higher honor than he possessed when he went into it. The disastrous retreat to Canada, and the sufferings his people underwent while he was leading them, caused him a considerable loss in prestige. Gall and Crow King, his chief lieutenants, found him to be a fraud and a coward, and deserted him. Hump of the Minniconjou left him and surrendered. Rain-in-the-Face and other hereditary chiefs of his people despised him as an incompetent leader and coward, and brought their people in. Sitting Bull surrendered at Fort Buford in July, 1881, and when I first came in contact with him personally he was a prisoner. Officially I had been watching him for years.

It was on the day I arrived to take charge of the agency at Standing Rock, September 8, 1881, that I saw him first. He was a prisoner on board the steamer General Sherman. The boat had brought me down from Bismarck, and was ordered to take on board at Fort Yates, near the agency, Sitting Bull and one hundred and forty-six of his fellow prisoners, for transport to Fort Randall. Sitting Bull and his people were on board when I went down to the steamer after getting my things ashore. He had sent for me to tell me of his grievances. He was a stocky man, with an evil face and shifty eyes, and he still showed the effect of his desperate experience of five years in the Canadian Northwest, chiefly in the Province of Alberta. He knew of me, and what little he said was without his usual arrogance, for he was then desirous of making friends. I saw no more of him until he was released as a prisoner of war and sent from Fort Randall, Dakota Territory, and came under my jurisdiction at Standing Rock on May 10, 1883, where he lived up to the time of his death, and where I succeeded in keeping him out of mischief generally until 1890.

KICKING BEAR AND THE COMING OF THE GHOSTS

It was in the early fall of 1890 that Kicking Bear, a half-crazed fanatic of the Minniconjou band, came up from the Cheyenne River reservation and imparted to Sitting Bull the secrets of the new religion which would bring the Indian into the inheritance of the earth. As an exhorter Kicking Bear was a power, but he had no force as a leader. The doctrine he came to spread was contrived with such ingenuity that it is still a wonder to me that it did not spread further among a people so much given to superstitions that accepted spiritism as the foundation of all things religious. It took a tremendous hold upon those who became at all infected with the new belief.

There has been much speculation as to the origin of the Messianic movement. The Indians said it came from a people "who lived beyond the Yellow Faces to the west of the Utes." This led me to believe that the craze took form at the instigation of some genius of the southwestern tribes, who had observed the practices of those descendants of the Aztecs who look to the east every morning in anticipation of the return of Montezuma, who is to redeem them from toil and subjection and set them to rule over the earth. The new belief had traveled far in a brief space of time, and sprang into vigorous life almost in a day on the Standing Rock reservation. It looked like an inspired outbreak of religious zeal. As a matter of fact I am convinced that the new religion was managed from the beginning, so far as the Standing Rock Sioux were concerned, by Sitting Bull, who had heard of the new faith that was making some headway in the southern reservations, and who, having lost his former influence over the Sioux, planned to import and use it to reëstablish himself in the leadership of the people, whom he might then lead in safety in any desperate enterprise which he might direct.

During the summer of that year I was repeatedly compelled to refuse Sitting Bull permission to visit the Cheyenne River reservation. Some reports had come to us of the introduction of the "Ghost-Dancing" religion in the southern reservations, and I declined to allow Sitting Bull to leave his home. He had established himself with his family and friends on the Grand River, forty miles southwest of the agency, and was under the espionage of Indians upon whose fidelity I could reckon; and that dependence was warranted even to the death, it was shown.

Sitting Bull had heard of Kicking Bear. That individual had been absent from home for about a year, and had begun to preach the new religion on his return. Finding that he could not get away himself, Sitting Bull sent six of his young men to Cherry Creek, on the Cheyenne River reservation, with an invitation to Kicking Bear to make him, Sitting Bull, a visit. The Minniconjou medicine man arrived at Grand River October 9, 1890, and forthwith initiated Sitting Bull into the mysteries of the new cult. I had never seen Kicking Bear at that time, but had learned of the doctrine upon which he based his preaching, the "revelation," from the lips of One Bull, a nephew of Sitting Bull, who repeated to me word for word, with that accuracy of memory that marks the unlettered, the preachment of Kicking Bear. One Bull, an Indian policeman at the time, imparted what he had heard of the new dispensation with obvious trepidation, but with some sense of security, because he had found that Sitting Bull's medicine was no longer good. I set the matter down at the time in the words of Kicking Bear, as repeated by One Bull, and here it is: —

"My brothers, I bring to you the promise of a day in which there will be no white man to lay his hand on the bridle of the Indian's horse; when the red men of the prairie will rule the world and not be turned from the hunting-grounds by any man. I bring you word from your fathers the ghosts, that they are now marching to join you, led by the Messiah who came once to live on earth with the white men, but was cast out and killed by them. I have seen the wonders of the spirit-land, and have talked with the ghosts. I traveled far and am sent back with a message to tell you to make ready for the coming of the Messiah and return of the ghosts in the spring.

"In my tepee on the Cheyenne reservation I arose after the corn-planting, sixteen moons ago, and prepared for my journey. I had seen many things and had been told by a voice to go forth and meet the ghosts, for they were to return and inhabit the earth. I traveled far on the cars of the white men, until I came to the place where the railroad stopped. There I met two men, Indians, whom I had never seen before, but who greeted me as a brother and gave me meat and bread. They had three horses, and we rode without talking for four days, for I knew they were to be witnesses to what I should see. Two suns had we traveled, and had passed the last signs of the white man, — for no white man had ever had the courage to travel so far, — when we saw a strange and fierce-looking black man, dressed in skins. He was living alone, and had medicine with which he could do what he wished. He would wave his hands and make great heaps of money; another motion, and we saw many spring wagons, already painted and ready to hitch horses to; yet another motion of the hands, and there sprung up before us great herds of buffalo. The black man spoke and told us that he was the friend of the Indian; that we should remain with him and go no farther, and we might take what we wanted of the money, and spring wagons, and the buffalo. But our hearts were turned away from the black man, my brothers, and we left him and traveled for two days more.

"On the evening of the fourth day, when we were weak and faint from our journey, we looked for a camping-place, and were met by a man dressed like an Indian, but whose hair was long and glistening like the yellow money of the white man. His face was very beautiful to see, and when he spoke my heart was glad and I forgot my hunger and the toil I had gone through. And he said, 'How, my children. You have done well to make this long journey to come to me. Leave your horses and follow me.' And our hearts sang in our breasts and we were glad. He led the way up a great ladder of small clouds, and we followed him up through an opening in the sky. My brothers, the tongue of Kicking Bear is straight and he cannot tell all that he saw, for he is not an orator, but the forerunner and herald of the ghosts. He whom we followed took us to the Great Spirit and his wife, and we lay prostrate on the ground, but I saw that they were dressed as Indians. Then from an opening in the sky we were shown all the countries of the earth and the camping-grounds of our fathers since the beginning; all were there, the tepees, and the ghosts of our fathers, and great herds of buffalo, and a country that smiled because it was rich and the white man was not there. Then he whom we had followed showed us his hands and feet, and there were wounds in them which had been made by the whites when he went to them and they crucified him. And he told us that he was going to come again on earth, and this time he would remain and live with the Indians, who were his chosen people.

"Then we were seated on rich skins, of animals unknown to me, before the open door of the tepee of the Great Spirit, and told how to say the prayers and perform the dances I am now come to show my brothers. And the Great Spirit spoke to us saying: —

"'Take this message to my red children and tell it to them as I say it. I have neglected the Indians for many moons, but I will make them my people now if they obey me in this message. The earth is getting old, and I will make it new for my chosen people, the Indians, who are to inhabit it, and among them will be all those of their ancestors who have died, their fathers, mothers, brothers, cousins and wives — all those who hear my voice and my words through the tongues of my children. I will cover the earth with new soil to a depth of five times the height of a man, and under this new soil will be buried the whites, and all the holes and the rotten places will be filled up. The new lands will be covered with sweet-grass and running water and trees, and herds of buffalo and ponies will stray over it, that my red children may eat and drink, hunt and rejoice. And the sea to the west I will fill up so that no ships may pass over it, and the other seas will I make impassable. And while I am making the new earth the Indians who have heard this message and who dance and pray and believe will be taken up in the air and suspended there, while the wave of new earth is passing; then set down among the ghosts of their ancestors, relatives, and friends. Those of my children who doubt will be left in undesirable places, where they will be lost and wander around until they believe and learn the songs and the dance of the ghosts. And while my children are dancing and making ready to join the ghosts, they shall have no fear of the white man, for I will take from the whites the secret of making gunpowder, and the powder they now have on hand will not burn when it is directed against the red people, my children, who know the songs and the dances of the ghosts; but that powder which my children, the red men, have, will burn and kill when it is directed against the whites and used by those who believe. And if a red man die at the hands of the whites while he is dancing, his spirit will only go to the end of the earth and there join the ghosts of his fathers and return to his friends next spring. Go then, my children, and tell these things to all the people and make all ready for the coming of the ghosts.'

"We were given food that was rich and sweet to taste, and as we sat there eating, there came up through the clouds a man, tall as a tree and thin like a snake, with great teeth sticking out of his mouth, his body covered with short hair, and we knew at once it was the Evil Spirit. And he said to the Great Spirit, 'I want half the people of the earth.' And the Great Spirit answered and said, 'No, I cannot give you any; I love them all too much.' The Evil Spirit asked again and was again refused, and asked the third time, and the Great Spirit then told him that he could have the whites to do what he liked with, but that he would not let him have any Indians, as they were his chosen people for all future time. Then we were shown the dances and taught the songs that I am bringing to you, my brothers, and were led down the ladder of clouds by him who had taken us up. We found our horses and rode back to the railroad, the Messiah flying along in the air with us and teaching us the songs for the new dances. At the railroad he left us and told us to return to our people, and tell them, and all the people of the red nations, what we had seen; and he promised us that he would return to the clouds no more, but would remain at the end of the earth and lead the ghosts of our fathers to meet us when the next winter is passed."

This relation — stripped of the flowers of language which even the less gifted of the Sioux medicine men use, and told as a bald and literal translation of what was a most attractive story to an imaginative and credulous people — was occasionally varied toward the end of Kicking Bear's mission, and he was known to have admitted that he did not make the journey to the clouds himself, but had met those who had gone aloft. These vagaries, however, did not count with those who had once committed themselves to the new faith. The doctrine was artfully framed to appeal to the cupidity of the Indian and to inflame him against the whites, carrying with it promise of return to the free life, with plenty of buffalo and no prospect of work. It upset none of the pagan ideas, and gave approval to the current belief in the existence of the ghosts. A more pernicious system of religion could not have been offered to a people who stood on the threshold of civilization, and who hungered for a realization of dreams that would free them from present poverty, probable hunger, and the prospect of toil.

The first thing to be done was to get rid of Kicking Bear. He was a big medicine man among his people, but I was convinced that Sitting Bull, having been initiated in the mysteries of the ghost-dance, would interpose no objection to the exclusion from his preserves of a competitor in the medicine-making. Sitting Bull had gone with zest into the business of promoting the new religion. Knowing his people, and utilizing the mysticism with which he habitually preyed on their superstitions, he established himself as the high priest of the cult even while Kicking Bear was still with him. He fasted and prayed with such vigor, and danced with such enthusiasm, that he reduced himself to mere skin and bone, and kept his people worked up to a high state of enthusiasm by inducing them to emulate his example. It was the appeal that the leaders of the ghost-dance made to the superstitions of the people that I feared most; and that I was justified in this fear was demonstrated when I sent a party of thirteen policemen, under the command of Crazy Walking, a man in whom I had the most complete faith, with orders to arrest Kicking Bear and eject him from the reservation.

The policemen found Kicking Bear and Sitting Bull conducting a séance, the Minniconjou exhorting the people. So impressed was the officer in charge of the police detachment with the dance and the wonderful stories told by the dancers about their visions, that he was turned from his purpose, and returned to the agency with Sitting Bull's promise that Kicking Bear would leave on the following day. This report was brought to me October 14, and I immediately sent Chatka, second lieutenant of the police force, to eject Kicking Bear. Lieutenant Chatka was a man of great firmness of character, and when he asked for only two men and said he would drive Kicking Bear out, I knew that the medicine of Kicking Bear would be wasted on him, whatever it might cost him mentally. Chatka arrived at Sitting Bull's camp on the Grand River the next day. A very large party of Indians were dancing. The lieutenant pushed his way through the dancers, notified Kicking Bear and six men from the Cheyenne River reservation who were with him, to leave the Standing Rock reservation forthwith, which they proceeded to do, and he conducted them to the Moreau River, the southern boundary of the reservation, about twenty-five miles southwest of Sitting Bull's camp. I cannot imagine a performance requiring more courage, from an Indian standpoint, than that accomplished by Lieutenant Chatka that day.

That night Sitting Bull broke the peace-pipe which he had kept sacredly since his surrender at Fort Buford in 1881. He deliberately broke it in the presence of the assemblage of ghost-dancers, saying that he was ready to fight and would die for this new religion if need be. The effect upon his over-credulous followers, of this grand-stand play, in which he was an adept, was, as the medicine man knew it would be, tremendous and far-reaching. The people understood Sitting Bull to mean that he would stand against the whites to the death; but he, at the same time, knew that the whites would pay no attention to this bit of bravado. After that day there was menace in the attitude of Sitting Bull that could only be met by summary treatment, and I recommended to the Department, urgently, the necessity of removing him, with his few mischief-making supporters, from the reservation to some remote military prison. I had previously, as early as June 18, 1890, made a similar recommendation, and included with him Circling Bear, Black Bird, and Circling Hawk, as men who should be removed from the reservation, whose active opposition to the government policies was detrimental to the peace and welfare of the Indians. At the same time I assured the Department of my control of the Indians on the reservation generally; and in this I was justified, for the disaffection never existed beyond about four hundred and fifty members, the immediate following of Sitting Bull, and thus involved only about ten per cent of the Indians of the Standing Rock agency.

Sitting Bull became insolent to the Indian police, and arrogant through being left unmolested. The well-disposed Indians living along Grand River adjacent to his camp, who would not accept the absurdities of the new doctrine, were subjected to frequent insults from him and his fanatical crazed adherents. He kept his people madly engaged in the new dance, adding absurdities to it from time to time as he observed interest and enthusiasm among them lagging. His conduct and attitude for some weeks previous to his arrest, together with the mysteriousness of his nightly séances, to which only unwavering members of the new doctrine were admitted, with the further fact that his immediate followers were uncommunicative and sullen, made it plainly evident that he was secretly preparing for some rash movement.

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RAIN-IN-THE-FACE

CHAPTER XII

THE DEATH OF SITTING BULL

How the Old Medicine Man met his Fate at the Hands of the Indian Police.

That fall there were strenuous times on the frontier, and, in the event, it marked the passing of that indefinable boundary between the refinements of civilization and the country to which the white man had turned in the determination to compel nature to his needs. Looking back at it now, I can see that the times were pregnant of great things. On the one hand stood the white man — and he was not standing still. Nothing could deter him from going forward, and if, in the march of civilization, a people was blotted out, it would not be the first time that the same march had proved remorseless.

On the other hand there was a people who stood at the threshold of civilization, many of whom were earnestly endeavoring to adjust themselves to the new conditions along the white man's road, but who wavered when bidden by the leaders of a savage cult to accept the new doctrine which so strongly appealed to all their traditions and inspirations. They were still very largely untutored, and strange to the ways of the white man. A few years back they knew no limit to their range in roaming save those set for them by tradition, and all of them remembered very vividly the buffalo and the plentitude of smaller game. The buffalo was as dependable and certain a means of subsistence for them as the crops of the white men, — even more so, — and in a day, almost, the buffalo had been obliterated. They had been accustomed to going out and taking what they would in the form of meat; suddenly that meat-supply was cut off, and they were rendered dependent on a government whose policy was the gradual reduction of gratuities to Indians. I was then, and am still, astonished at the spirit displayed by the Indians under the circumstances, and am sure it was not meekness. They were bold enough in most things, but they appeared to have been suddenly forced to the knowledge that the white man was master of the situation and the country, and that the salvation of the Indian lay along the broadly blazed trail made by the whites. The younger element among the Indians was quite ready to accept the inevitable, to abandon the god of things as they ought to be for "the god of things as they are." The unreconstructed element among the old leaders, who saw their power vanishing in the dawn of the day of the man who works, whose pride of place and chieftainship was being swallowed by Indians who had come to know the meaning of earning their bread by the sweat of their brows, — this element was standing for a voiceless and purposeless protest.

It was not to be wondered at that the unreconstructed Indians should seize upon the excuse furnished by the inventors of the Messianic movement to put their protest into form. Hollow Horn Bear, a chief of the Brule Sioux, and a man of standing and influence to-day, told me once that he saw the inevitable.

"I believe," he said, "that I must die, and I think it would be better for me to die fighting with weapons in my hands than to starve to death at the agency door."

Hollow Horn Bear has changed his opinion and his attitude, but what he said expressed the thought of the unreconstructed Indian of ghost-dancing days.

Considering the attitude of many of the older and more influential Indians and the seductive promises of the prophets of the Indian Messiah, it may be said now that a bloody Indian war was averted at that time by the narrowest margin, and that margin held by the men who had won the loyal support of Indians of standing and influence, whose intelligence had been developed to a stage which permitted them to see clearly that the Indian could not hope to cope with the white man in a test of strength. And, in my personal experience, I was shown that there were Indians whose loyalty to their pledged word was so strong and dependable that they were ready not only to dare the opprobrium of their people, but to defy the powers of the unseen and unknown world before which they and their ancestors had always trembled.

It was on the fidelity of such men as these that I reckoned when I assured the Department, in the summer of 1890, that there was no danger of an uprising and that I had my people well in hand. Going back to June 7 of that year, I find a letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in which it is stated that a letter had been received by the Department from a well-known citizen of Pierre, South Dakota, saying that the Sioux Indians were planning an outbreak. Replying to this letter I said, in part, under date of June 18: —

"So far as the Indians of this agency [Standing Rock] are concerned, there is nothing in either their words or their actions that would justify the rumor. . . . There are a few malcontents here, as at all of the Sioux agencies, who cling tenaciously to the old Indian ways and are slow to accept the new order of things, . . . and this class of Indians are ever ready to circulate idle rumors and sow dissensions to discourage the more progressive, . . . and the removal from among them of a few individuals such as Sitting Bull, Circling Bear, Black Bird, and Circling Hawk, of this agency, Big Foot and his lieutenants of Cheyenne River agency, Crow Dog and Low Dog of Rosebud, and any of the like sort of Pine Ridge, would end all trouble and uneasiness in the future."

This recommendation I reiterated repeatedly. It was the common-sense proposition to remove the disaffected from the well affected; but the desired order was not forthcoming until the disaffection had assumed alarming proportions.

I felt secure in the knowledge that the Standing Rock Indians in general could be depended upon to behave themselves, but was very anxious that Sitting Bull, the prime mischief-maker, should be removed — not because there was danger that he might indulge in any overt act, but because he was demoralizing the people who submitted to his influence. The preachment to the Indians of this New Doctrine, and the possibilities of an unholy war based upon fanatical inspiration, was too good a thing to be passed by newspaper correspondents, and the public press soon announced with sensational headlines that the Messianic movement was quite general among the various Indian tribes, and had assumed startling proportions elsewhere before its effect was felt on the Standing Rock reservation.

The spread of news in the Indian country is one of those things not understandable of the white man, and the coming of the Messiah was spread among the Indians with the speed of the telegraph. It appeared one day among the Shoshones and Arapahoes in Wyoming, with a personal Messiah up in the mountains in some inaccessible place; the next day it was talked of in Oklahoma, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, — the Indians of widely distant localities coming simultaneously to the knowledge of the impending emancipation of the red man. The preaching was varied according to the locality, or the needs or intelligence of its promoters and prophets. But behind it all there was the same menace to white domination, the same appeal to the prejudices and passions of the red man, the same promise of a return to the blissful state of freedom and plenty that had obtained before the coming of the white man and the passing of the buffalo. In those parts of the country where the Indian was as little understood as he was known personally, his mysterious attitude led many to believe it to mean an impending Indian war, and everybody appeared to overlook the conditions that surrounded the red man. If it had developed a war, it could only have been a war of self-sacrifice, resulting in extermination of the Indians involved, as it could not have gone further than outbreaks in certain sections of the country, as, for instance, among the allied people of what had recently been the Great Sioux reservation. An outbreak might be disastrous if the Indians were permitted to mass, after defying the agency authorities, but only sparsely settled districts would be involved. It was plainly the business of the government and its agents to prevent the Indians from leaving the reservations upon which they were located, and to suppress the ghost-dancing by demonstrating to the unthinking the powerlessness of their prophets to save themselves from punishment for insubordination. I knew these conditions, and suggested a remedy at once in the removal of the trouble-makers.

I had no doubt of the loyalty of a vast majority of the people of the reservation, and knew that the suppression of the "pernicious activity" of Sitting Bull would go far toward putting an end to the craze throughout the country; but he was not removed and became bolder in his work of spreading the ghost-dancing propaganda. His following, however, continued very generally restricted to his own particular people of the Hunkpapa band living along the Grand River. But some of the best men on the reservation were touched in their superstitious natures by the new religion. I had to bolster up more than one of the head men, and in this I was aided by their personal hatred of the man who had led them into so much trouble in the seventies. There were not wanting those who volunteered to go out and bring Sitting Bull in; but, lacking orders for the arrest of the man, I could not permit this.

October 17 I wrote the Department again, giving a history of the ghost-dancing craze on the Standing Rock reservation, and concluding in these words: —

"Desiring to exhaust all reasonable means before resorting to extremes, I have sent a message to Sitting Bull, by One Bull, his nephew, that I want to see him at the agency, and I feel quite confident that I shall succeed in allaying the present excitement and put a stop to this absurd craze for the present at least; but I would respectfully recommend the removal from the reservation and confinement in some military prison at a distance from the Sioux country, of Sitting Bull and the parties named in my letter of June 18 last."

In response to this I received, under date of October 29, a letter from Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, R. V. Belt, directing me to notify Sitting Bull and the other malcontents that the Secretary of the Interior was greatly displeased with their conduct, and to let Sitting Bull understand that he would be held to a strict accountability for the misconduct of any of his followers.

During the following two weeks agitation was progressing in the outside world and the state of the public mind was probably represented in the action of the government which resulted in this order by telegraph: —

"Washington, *Nov.* 14, 1890.

"To McLaughlin,
"Agent, Standing Rock Agency, —

"The President has directed the Secretary of War to assume a military responsibility for the suppression of any threatened outbreak among the Sioux Indians, and that an officer of high rank be sent to investigate the situation among them. He suggests that the agents separate the well-disposed from the ill-disposed Indians, and, while maintaining their control and discipline, so far as possible to avoid forcing any issue that will result in an outbreak. You will exercise wise discretion in carrying out the President's suggestion, carefully observing the caution he directs and avoiding publicity of these instructions.

"R. V. Belt,
"Acting Commissioner."

At this late day I am frank to say that I feared military interference with the Indians, not that I doubted the capacity of the military, but because I was convinced that a military demonstration would precipitate a collision and bloodshed, which might be avoided. I was on excellent terms with all of the army officers of the Department of Dakota, and Colonel Drum, the commanding officer at Fort Yates, was quite as anxious as I was that Sitting Bull and his lieutenants should be quietly removed from the reservation, we continuing to coöperate during the ghost-dancing and up to the time of its culmination.

Things went on as usual in the Messianic camp, the Indians dancing, with Sitting Bull making medicine daily and promising the extermination of the whites, until November 17, when I proceeded, in company with Louis Primeau, a mixed-blood interpreter, to the Grand River, where I was informed a big dance was in progress. At this time Sitting Bull had not been in for his rations for some weeks, which led me to believe that he meant mischief. I had always made it a practice to go unarmed among the Indians, and the fact that I carried no arms that day, and the further fact that I was on excellent terms, personally, with nearly all the Indians, doubtless stood me in good stead.

I arrived at Sitting Bull's camp about three o'clock in the afternoon. It was Sunday, and I was not surprised to see a large gathering of people in front of the houses, six in number, in the centre of the camp. Many of the Indians had come on a visit, but they had brought their tents with them as though to make a prolonged stay. Having approached the camp by a road not usually traveled, and my coming being unexpected, I found the ghost-dance at its full height. There were about two hundred people standing in a circle about the dancers, and except for a few men who endeavored to avoid being seen by me, I received no attention from the enthusiasts as I approached. But the madness of the dance demonstrated the height of distraction to which the dancers had attained.

The sacred pole about which the people danced was set some distance from the houses. Around this pole a ring of men, women, boys, and girls, about one hundred in all, were dancing. Some of the younger ones had been pupils of the reservation day-schools until within a few weeks. The dancers held each other's hands, and were all jumping madly, whirling to the left about the pole, keeping time to a mournful crooning song, that sometimes rose to a shriek as the women gave way to the stress of their feelings. There was nothing of the slow and precise treading which ordinarily marks the time of the Indian religious dance. Some of the dancers had thrown off their upper clothing, and all were gasping excitedly; a few who had been dancing for a considerable length of time were completely crazed, with their tongues lolling from their mouths. Occasionally a poor creature, overcome by the fatigue of the exciting dance, would fall out of the ring, which was immediately closed up, and the circling to the left continued, the dancers paying no attention to the fallen one. As I looked on, a middle-aged woman fell out of the circle and rolled to some distance. She was picked up by the shoulders by two Indians, whose trappings indicated that they were officers of the dance, and who dragged her to a tepee which I had not noticed before, but which commanded my attention now, for within the wide-open flaps of the wigwam, seated on a sort of throne, was my old friend, Sitting Bull. He was very much thinner than a few weeks previous, but the look he gave me showed that his wits were not dulled or his hatred and envy lessened by the rigor of his life. By his side, fantastically dressed, stood Bull Ghost, Sitting Bull's mouthpiece in the ghost-dance exercises. Bull Ghost had been rather popular with the whites around the agency, and was familiarly known as 'One-Eyed-Riley,' he having but one eye and that not an attractive orb.

The woman, still in a swoon, was laid at Sitting Bull's feet, and Bull Ghost announced in a loud voice that she was in a trance and communicating with the ghosts, upon which announcement the dance ceased, so that the dancers might hear the message from the spirit world. Sitting Bull performed certain incantations, then leaned over and put his ear to the woman's lips. He spoke in a low voice to his herald, Bull Ghost, who repeated to the listening multitude the message which Sitting Bull pretended to receive from the unconscious woman. Sitting Bull had all the tricks of the fake spiritualist. Knowing his people intimately, he knew all about the dead relatives of the woman who had fainted, and he made a tremendous impression on his audience by giving them personal messages from the Indian ghosts, who announced with great unanimity that they were marching east to join their living kinsmen the following spring.

The excitement was very intense, the people being brought to a pitch of high nervousness by the treatment prescribed by Sitting Bull for his followers. He required that each initiate, as well as those desiring to join the ghost-dancers, take a vapor-bath every morning, and this was accomplished by means of small, closely built lodges, in which the people collected, three or four at a time. Outside of the lodge a hole was dug in the ground, in which attendants heated small boulders, and thrust them into the lodge, together with a bucket of water, then closed all openings of the wickiup. The hot stones were sprinkled with water, thus creating a hot steam in the small lodge, and during this bath prayers were being sung continually. The bathers remained in the steam-heated tent as long as they could stand it, and were then dragged forth, nearly dead, to be anointed by the medicine man and then permitted to dance until they dropped; and this daily performance, with very little food, had made them subjects for the madhouse.

Obviously there would be no sense in attempting to talk to them in their present state, and I drove off to Bull Head's house, three miles away.

At daylight next morning, I returned to Sitting Bull's camp. It was barely six o'clock when I arrived, Bull Head, Lieutenant of the Indian Police, riding beside the wagon in which Primeau and I rode. The camp was very quiet, but there were figures about the long row of wickiups in which the ghost-dancers were taking their vapor-baths. I entered Sitting Bull's house and found his two wives and four of his children within. The women, very much excited, said that Sitting Bull was taking a bath, and offered to go and call him. They were told not to disturb him, as I would wait until he had finished his bath; and after conversing with the family a few minutes, I left the house. As I turned the corner of the building, I came face to face with the old medicine man, who had seen me entering his cabin and came to learn why I was so early abroad. He was naked, but for a breech-cloth and moccasins, and he looked very thin and more subdued than I had ever seen him. He stopped and said, "How."

"How," said I, and extended my hand, which he took, and I drew him toward the wagon and away from the cabin. He was handed a blanket, which he gathered around him, and stopped, sullen, but not fiercely insolent, as he had been with white people since the dancing had commenced. Other figures crept out of the wickiups in the early morning light and began to gather around us. Sitting Bull said nothing, and I made up my mind that I would proceed at once to tell him what I had to say before the entire encampment could congregate and disturb us.

"Look here, Sitting Bull," I began, "I want to know what you mean by your present conduct and utter disregard of department orders. Your preaching and practicing of this absurd Messiah doctrine is causing a great deal of uneasiness among the Indians of the reservation, and you should stop it at once."

He was actually meek, and I thought perhaps he might be sincere in his religious fervor; but his crafty eye dispelled that idea. Without giving him time to talk, I recalled all my connection with him and showed him my friendly inclination. I recalled the time when he had sent word to me from Alberta, Canada, by Bishop Marty, to help him make his peace with the authorities before he surrendered; I reminded him of the talk we had when he was a prisoner on the steamer General Sherman, leaving Fort Yates for Fort Randall in September, 1881, and how he had been given his liberty through following my advice. He mumbled some thanks when I told him of the time he had written to me from Fort Randall, and sent the letter by his brother-in-law, Gray Eagle, and adopted brother, Little Assiniboine, in which he had besought me to try and obtain his freedom and have him sent to Standing Rock reservation. And I went on, Indian-like, through the little list of things I had done for him at various times, and wound up by reproaching him for leading the people astray and setting them back for years, besides making it certain that they would all be punished. His eyes flashed, but the old fellow did not break out in a rage as I expected he might. On the contrary he seemed to be impressed at once, and when Yellow Otter's voice rose loud in excited protest, above the sneering of the crowd that had gathered about us, he turned on the speaker and ordered him to be silent. Then he indulged in a harangue. He spoke only of the new faith, and how he believed in it and the good that it would bring to his people. I interrupted him to say that it would bring them all into trouble, and that he well knew it to be rubbish. He grew a little defiant and told me that I knew nothing about it. Then he changed his tune and said: —

"Father, I will make you a proposition which will settle this question. You go with me to the agencies to the West, and let me seek for the men who saw the Messiah; and when we find them, I will demand that they show him to us, and if they cannot do so I will return and tell my people it is a lie."

I told him that such an attempt would be like catching up with the wind that blew last year; that he should come and spend a night with me at the agency, so that I might convince him of the absurdity of the doctrine he was practicing, through which he was misleading his over-credulous followers.

This he would not do, but said: —

"My heart inclines to do what you request, but I must consult my people. I would be willing to go with you now, but I cannot leave without the consent of my people. I will talk to the men to-night, and if they think it advisable I will go to the agency next Saturday."

I could get no further promise from him, and drove away, the crowd threatening and sneering, but held in check by the upraised arm of the old medicine man, standing almost naked in the bright but chilly morning sunlight. Our talk had lasted about an hour, and I said nothing to Primeau, who accompanied me, nor did Primeau make any remark as we drove out of the camp, but I know that we both felt more comfortable when we got over a ridge of hills and out of rifle-range of the crazed throng of ghost-dancers.

That was the last time that I saw Sitting Bull alive, for he sent word by Strikes-the-Kettle the following Saturday that he could not come to the agency.

I reported this visit to the Department, and, being quite convinced that Sitting Bull would not come in, I wrote, under date of November 19, recommending that the ghost-dancers be attacked in the weakest point of their religious armor — through their stomachs. My recommendation was that all Indians living on Grand River be notified that those wishing to be known as opposed to the ghost-doctrine, friendly to the government, and desiring the support provided for in the treaty, should report at the agency for enrollment and be required to encamp near the agency for a few weeks, and that subsistence issues be withheld from those electing to remain on Grand River, continuing their medicine practices in violation of department orders. I was quite confident that such a course would soon have left Sitting Bull with but few followers, as all, or nearly all, would have reported for enrollment and rations, and he would thus have been forced to come in himself.

I had no doubt then and have none now that, if this suggestion had been adopted, the ghost-dancing would have been broken up, for I knew the Indian well enough to be assured that a material meal would attract him far more effectually than a feast with the ghosts. The suggestion was not officially adopted, but events were crowding at Washington, and November 20 I received this telegram: —

"McLaughlin, Agent, —

"If condition of affairs now and for future requires that leaders of excitement or fomenters of disturbance should be arrested and confined to insure quiet and good order among Indians, telegraph me names at once, so that assistance of military while operating to suppress any attempted outbreak may be had to make arrests.

"R. V. Belt,
"Acting Commissioner."

I wired the names of the men whose arrest I had suggested the preceding June, adding the names of Iron White Man and Male Bear, but added that I thought it imprudent to attempt making the desired arrests at that time, and invited attention to my suggestion of the 19th.

At that time the situation was well in hand, and if I could have chosen the time I could have arrested Sitting Bull without bloodshed. The plan was simple enough, it being the custom of the Indians of the entire reservation to congregate at the agency once every two weeks (every alternate Saturday), to receive their rations, and on these issue-days Sitting Bull was practically alone at his camp on Grand River, forty miles from the agency. The police, under Lieutenant Bull Head, were absolutely to be depended upon and willing to do anything that would promote order. Lieutenant Bull Head, who lived about three miles west of the ghost-dance camp, was watching Sitting Bull and his followers and kept them under strict surveillance. The old chief could make no move that could not be anticipated, and the arrest could be made without difficulty, unless trouble was precipitated from the outside. And the threat came on us like a bolt from the blue, and though bloodshed was averted for the moment, I knew that affairs might get beyond control at any time.

The threat took form in Colonel William F. Cody

(Buffalo Bill), who arrived at the agency on November 28, with an order signed by General Miles, then division commander, directing military officers to supply Colonel Cody with whatever assistance was necessary in arresting Sitting Bull. It was not my affair, but I felt that I was responsible for the conduct of the Indians, and I knew that any attempt by outside parties to arrest Sitting Bull would undoubtedly result in loss of life, as the temper of the ghost-dancers was not to be doubted. And upon Colonel Cody's arrival at the agency I sent the following telegram to Washington: —

"Commissioner of Indian Affairs, —

"William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) has arrived here with commission from Gen. Miles to arrest Sitting Bull. Such a step at present is unnecessary and unwise, as it will precipitate a fight which can be averted. A few Indians still dancing, but it does not mean mischief at present. I have matters well in hand, and when proper time arrives can arrest Sitting Bull by Indian police without bloodshed. I ask attention to my letter of November 19. Request Gen. Miles's order to Cody be rescinded and request immediate answer.

"McLaughlin, Agent."

I felt that I was justified in asking that the order of a general of division, who was not on the ground, should be rescinded. It was a bold step to take, but I could see nothing else to do. And I was still convinced that the arrest would be bloodless only if made on ration-day. The morning after Colonel Cody's arrival he left the agency with a civilian escort for Sitting Bull's camp before any reply had been received to my telegram of the previous day. I had no disposition to interpose my feeble authority to that of the military, on the contrary I had been coöperating fully with Colonel Drum, the commandant at Fort Yates; but my telegram saved to the world that day a royal good fellow and most excellent showman, for General Miles's order was rescinded by telegraph, and Buffalo Bill was overtaken with the message and turned back before he reached Grand River.

The Buffalo Bill incident was hardly disposed of before it was made clear that the future operations against the ghost-dancers were to be carried on at the direction of the military arm, and on December 1, I received this telegram: —

"Washington, *Dec.* 1.

"McLaughlin, Agent,
"Standing Rock, —

"By direction of the Secretary, during the present Indian troubles, you are instructed that while you shall continue all the business and carry into effect the educational and other purposes of your agency, you will, as to all operations intended to suppress any outbreak by force, coöperate with and obey the orders of the military officers commanding on the reservation in your charge.

"R. V. Belt,
"Acting Commissioner."

It was evident that the military intended to arrest Sitting Bull, and I still had it in my mind that if I could make provision to make the arrest by the Indian police, at an opportune time and in my own way, there would be no necessity for shedding blood. I was absolutely convinced that, unless the arrest was made by surprise, there would be trouble. I telegraphed the commissioner December 6, again, asking if I was authorized to arrest Sitting Bull when I thought best, and got this reply: —

"Washington, *Dec.* 6.

"McLaughlin, Agent, —

"Replying to your telegram of this date, Secretary directs that you make no arrests whatever, except under orders of the military, or upon an order from the Secretary of the Interior.

"R. V. Belt,
"Acting Commissioner."

General Ruger, then in command of the Department of Dakota, showed the utmost good-will and a desire to coöperate with the agency people, as the following telegram, referring to a message sent by him to Colonel Drum, the commanding officer at Fort Yates, demonstrates: —

"St. Paul, Minn., *Dec.* 6.

"U. S. Indian Agent, James McLaughlin, —

"Referring to telegram sent to Col. Drum, which he will show you, is there any change of condition recently which makes present action specially necessary? As you know I am disposed to support you. Some prior movements I would like to see completed.

"Ruger,
"Brigadier General, Commanding."

In reply I telegraphed General Ruger that there had been no material change in conditions; that the police could keep Sitting Bull on the reservation and arrest him when necessary, but that there was no urgent need for action. It was too late for action that day — which was beef-ration day — and I was still minded to stick to my original proposition that the arrest should be made while Sitting Bull was practically alone at his camp. He had not been in for his rations since October 25. The dancing was still going on, with cold weather — so usual at that season of the year, and which might have been depended on to cool the ardor of the dancers — still holding off.

Sitting Bull was in constant communication with the Southern Sioux agencies, and it was becoming very certain that he was going to attempt to leave the reservation, and his escape had to be guarded against. The disaffected Indians at the agencies along the Missouri River, as well as those of Rosebud and Pine Ridge, would see in him a leader they might follow to a desperate purpose, and I was not going to permit him to decamp. In the Bad Lands there was gathered a considerable mass of Indians, eighteen hundred having stampeded from their homes when General Brook arrived at Pine Ridge with five companies of infantry and three troops of cavalry, part of which force he detached and sent to Rosebud. Big Foot and his band escaped after arrest by the military on the Cheyenne River reservation. Obviously it would not do to allow so cunning and malignant a leader as Sitting Bull to put himself at the head of these frightened or desperate people. There is no doubt that many of the Indians who had taken to the Bad Lands were simply frightened by the presence of the troops. But they were also tremendously excited, and in their stampede and flight destroyed much property belonging to themselves and others. I knew that Sitting Bull contemplated putting himself at the head of the fugitives, and that those who were merely frightened would soon be turned or coerced to acts of hostility under his guidance.

Ninety per cent of the Standing Rock Indians continued loyal, the police were devoted and vigilant, and only the Sitting Bull following gave promise of trouble.

December 12 came the order for the arrest of Sitting Bull. It was in the form of a cipher telegram and follows, translated: —

"To COMMANDING OFFICER,
"Fort Yates, N. D., —

"The division commander has directed that you make it your especial duty to secure the person of Sitting Bull. Call on Indian agent to coöperate and render such assistance as will best promote the purpose in view. Acknowledge receipt, and if not perfectly clear, repeat back.

"M. BARBER,
"Assistant Adjutant General.

"DEPARTMENT OF DAKOTA,
"ST. PAUL, MINN., *Dec.* 12, 1890."

Colonel Drum furnished me with a copy of the order, and upon conferring with him in reference to the arrest, we fully agreed on the course of procedure. Colonel Drum was quite of the same mind that I was about the necessity for making the arrest while Sitting Bull's camp was practically deserted; that it should be made by the Indian police, with the military supporting at a convenient distance, to aid the police in case of attempted rescue, and it was finally determined that the arrest should be made on the next ration-day, December 20, unless it was precipitated by Sitting Bull trying to leave the reservation. Lieutenant Bull Head, of the Indian police, who lived, as I have said, about three miles west of the ghost-dance camp, was given charge of the duty of keeping Sitting Bull under surveillance, with orders instantly to report any suspicious movements. He chose for his assistant First Sergeant Shave Head, a stout-hearted and intelligent man who could be depended upon in any emergency. They were to hold a considerable force of Indian police on the Grand River, adjacent to Sitting Bull's camp, and Sergeant Eagleman was sent with eight additional policemen to Oak Creek, twenty miles south of the agency, that they might be within supporting distance if needed by the force on Grand River.

About six o'clock in the evening of December 13, Bull Ghost came into the agency with a letter to me from Sitting Bull, his last utterance, full of defiance and implied threats, but so incoherent as to be difficult to understand. It was written by Andrew Fox, Sitting Bull's son-in-law, who could speak English and write a little. It was addressed, "The Major at the Indian office."

These portions I could decipher: —

"I had a meeting with all my Indians to-day and am writing this order to you. . . . God made the red race and the white, but the white higher. . . . I wish no one to come to me in my prayers with gun or knife. . . . And you, my friend, to-day you think I am foll [fool] and you tell some of the wise men among my people . . . so you don't like me. . . . I don't like myself, my friend, when some one is foll. . . . You think if I am not here the Indians is civilization. . . . Also I will let you know something. I got to go to Pine Ridge agency, and to know this pray. So I let you know that and the policeman told me that you going to take all our ponies, guns too. So I want to let you know this. I want answer back soon.

"SITTING BULL."

While Sitting Bull was having this letter written, he was preparing to leave the reservation and his horses had been brought in. On the 14th, in the afternoon, special policeman Hawk Man brought me a letter from Bull Head, dated at Grand River at 12.50 A.M., and written by John M. Carignan, then teacher at the Grand River day-school, now manager of a trader's store at Fort Yates, informing me that Sitting Bull was getting ready to leave the reservation and action must be taken at once; that his horses had been doing nothing for several weeks, being well fed all the time; and that, being thus better mounted than the Indian police, if he got started, they would be unable to overtake the party or prevent them from reaching the Bad Lands, where the main body of the disaffected Sioux had congregated. Colonel Drum, the post commander, having seen the courier passing his quarters, and being anxious to learn the latest news from the Sitting Bull camp, came into my office while I was reading the letter, and upon being informed of its contents concluded that the arrest should be made the next morning. I was anxious that the arrest should be made by the police, because otherwise it was not possible without bloodshed; and for the further reason that the arrest being made by the police would have a salutary effect upon the Indians in general. Colonel Drum heartily agreed with me in this view of the case, and it was determined that two troops of the Eighth Cavalry, numbering one hundred men, with Captain E. G. Fechet in command, should leave Fort Yates at midnight in order to arrive at the Oak Creek crossing of the Sitting Bull road by 6.30 of the 15th, to support the police if necessary; and before Colonel Drum left my office, I wrote the following letter in English, with a translation of it in Sioux, ordering the arrest of Sitting Bull, which I sent to Lieutenant Bull Head by Second Sergeant Red Tomahawk.

"STANDING ROCK AGENCY, N. D.,
"*Dec.* 14, 1890.

"Lieut. BULL HEAD, or Sergt. SHAVE HEAD,
"Grand River, —

"From reports brought by Scout Hawk Man I believe that the time has arrived for the arrest of Sitting Bull and that it can be made by the Indian police without much risk. I therefore desire you to make the arrest before daylight to-morrow morning, and try and get back to the Sitting Bull road crossing of Oak Creek by daylight to-morrow morning or as soon thereafter as possible. The Cavalry will leave to-night and reach the Sitting Bull crossing of Oak Creek before daylight to-morrow morning (Monday), where they will remain until they hear from you.

"Louis Primeau will accompany the Cavalry command as guide, and I desire you to send a messenger to the Cavalry as soon as you can after making the arrest, so that the troops may know how to act in aiding you or preventing any attempt of his followers from rescuing him.

"I have ordered all the police at Oak Creek to proceed to Carignan's school and await your orders. This gives you a force of forty-two policemen for the arrest.

"Very respectfully,
"James McLaughlin,
"U. S. Indian Agent.

"P. S. You must not let him escape under any circumstances."

These orders, in duplicate, were, as before stated, given to Sergeant Red Tomahawk, a man who could be depended upon to get through with them, and who did so and signally distinguished himself the next morning. The verbal instructions given Red Tomahawk as to assembling the scattered detachments of the Indian police were complete.

Thirty-nine regular policemen and four specials, under Bull Head and Shave Head, rode into the Sitting Bull camp at early dawn the next morning. Some of the men had traveled immense distances to rendezvous at the home of Lieutenant Bull Head, and all were firmly determined to make the arrest. Sitting Bull's band lived in houses stretching along the Grand River for a distance of four or five miles. About the home of the chief, consisting of two houses and a corral, there were a half-dozen log-cabins of good size. Many of the houses were deserted, the Indians having been engaged in dancing the greater part of the previous night. The entrance of the policemen awakened the camp, but they saw no one, as Bull Head wheeled his men between the Sitting Bull houses and ordered them to dismount. Ten policemen, headed by Bull Head and Shave Head, entered one of the houses, eight policemen the other. In the house entered by Bull Head's party they found the old medicine man, his two wives, and Crow Foot his son, a youth of seventeen years.

The women were very much frightened and began to cry. Sitting Bull sat up and asked what was the matter.

"You are under arrest and must go to the agency," said Bull Head.

"Very well," said Sitting Bull, "I will go with you." And he told one of his wives to go to the other house and bring him his best clothes. He showed no concern at his arrest, but evidently wanted to make a good impression and dressed himself with some care. He had also asked that his best horse, a gray one, be saddled, and an Indian policeman had the animal at the door by the time Sitting Bull was dressed and ready to leave.

There had been no trouble in the house, and the police, when they walked out, were surprised at the extent of the demonstration. They came out of the building in a little knot, Bull Head on one side of Sitting Bull, Shave Head on the other, and Red Tomahawk directly behind. They had been twenty minutes or more in Sitting Bull's house, and it was in the gray of the morning when they came out. They stepped out into a mass of greatly excited ghost-dancers, nearly all armed and crowding about the main body of the police, who had held the way clear at the door. As Sitting Bull stepped out with his captors he walked directly toward the horse, with the evident intention of mounting and accompanying the police. He was some distance from the door when his son, Crow Foot, seeing that the old man intended to make no resistance, began to revile him: —

"You call yourself a brave man and you have declared that you would never surrender to a blue-coat, and now you give yourself up to Indians in blue uniforms," the young man shouted.

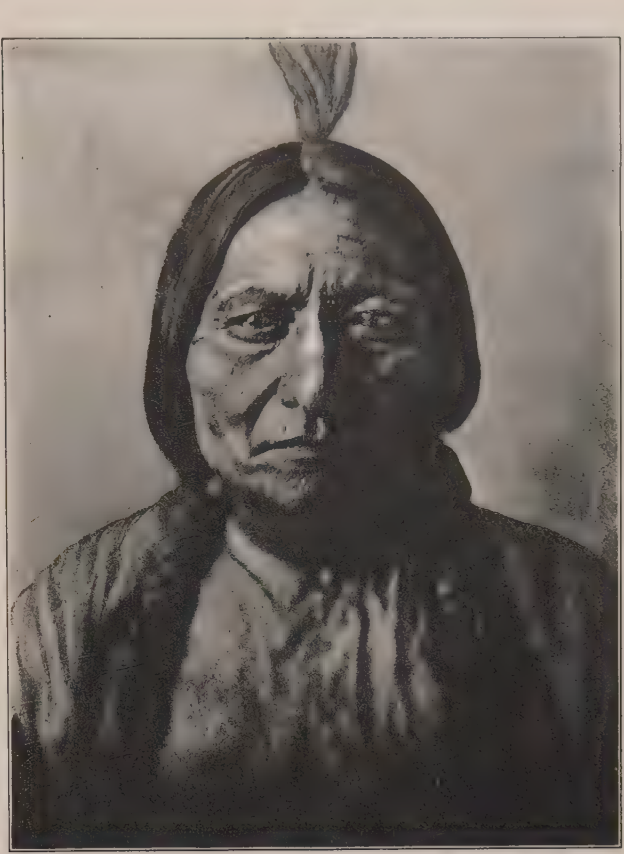
The taunt hit Sitting Bull hard. He looked into the mass of dark, excited faces, and commenced to talk volubly and shrilly, and there was a menacing movement in the crowd.

The last moment of Sitting Bull's life showed him in a better light, so far as physical courage goes, than all the rest of it. He looked about him and saw his faithful adherents — about one hundred and sixty crazed ghost-dancers — who would have gone through fire at his bidding; to submit to arrest meant the end of his power and his probable imprisonment; he had sure news from Pine Ridge that he, only, was needed to head the hostiles there in a war of extermination against the white settlers. He made up his mind to take his chance, and screamed out an order to his people to attack the police.

Instantly Catch-the-Bear and Strikes-the-Kettle, who were in the front rank of the crowd, fired at point-blank range, Catch-the-Bear mortally wounding First Lieutenant Bull Head, and Strikes-the-Kettle shooting First Sergeant Shave Head in the abdomen. Lieutenant Bull Head was a few yards to the left and front of Sitting Bull when hit, and immediately wheeling, he shot Sitting Bull through the body, and at the same instant Second Sergeant Red Tomahawk, who with revolver in hand was rear-guard, shot him in the right cheek, killing him instantly; the lieutenant, the first sergeant, and Sitting Bull falling together.

Sitting Bull's medicine had not saved him, and the shot that killed him put a stop forever to the domination of the ancient régime among the Sioux of the Standing Rock reservation.

The tale of the bloody fight that ensued has been told, and the world knows how those thirty-nine Indian policemen, with four of their relatives who volunteered to accompany them, — a total of forty-three in all, — fought off one hundred and sixty ghost-dancers, eight of whom were killed and five wounded; how second Sergeant Red Tomahawk, after the two higher ranking police officers had been mortally wounded, took command and drove the Indians to the timber; how Hawk Man No. 1 ran through a hail of bullets to get the news to the cavalry detachment, and how six faithful friends of the whites, policemen of the Standing Rock reservation, laid down their lives in doing their duty that morning. Two days later, on December 17, 1900, we buried Shave Head and four other Indian policemen with military honors in the cemetery at Standing Rock, and, while Captain Miner's entire company of the Twenty-Second U. S. Infantry fired three volleys over the graves of these red heroes, and a great concourse of the Sioux of the reservation stood in the chill bright sunlight of a fair winter's day, mourning aloud for their dead, I quietly left the enclosure and joined a little burial-party in the military cemetery at Fort Yates, situated about five hundred yards south of the agency cemetery. Four military prisoners dug the grave, and in the presence of A. R. Chapin, Assistant Surgeon, U. S. A., H. M. Deeble, Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. A., Lieutenant P. G. Wood, U. S. A., Post Quartermaster, now Brigadier General, retired, and myself, the body of Sitting Bull, wrapped in canvas and placed in a coffin, was lowered into the grave.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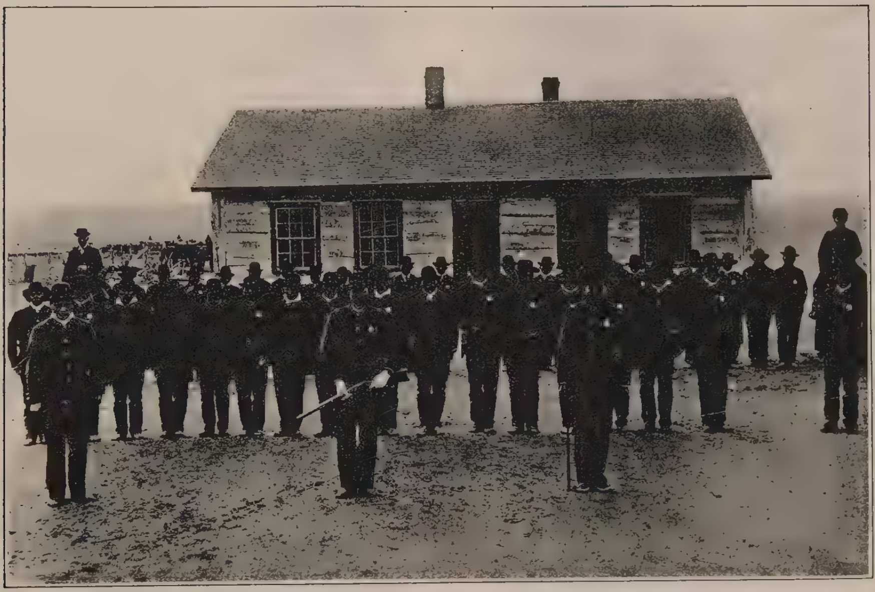
SITTING BULL


THE STANDING ROCK INDIAN POLICE, SURVIVORS OF THE SITTING BULL FIGHT

Taken five days after the death of Sitting Bull. Major McLaughlin is seen mounted in the left background

CHAPTER XIII

HOW THE INDIAN GETS HIS NAME

A Queer System of Nomenclature which gives the Red Man some Untranslatable Titles.

When Rain-in-the-Face was but a brown-skinned mite, the mother of the mite set him up in the shade of a tree while she got ready the midday meal of her lord, the father of Rain-in-the-Face. The boy baby was strapped to a board, his small body embedded in the fuzz of the cat-tails and wound about with the skin of a deer. Erect and stiff, but comfortable enough, the boy lay, dodging his head that he might see past the hooped bough that was bent over his face so that he might not be marred in his looks if he should fall. And as he looked at the sky and communed, after the fashion of Sioux babies, with the spirits of the other world, the thunder-bird settled in the limb of a nearby tree and a shower fell. The mother, engaged in her domestic work, forgot the child for the moment, and a neighbor ran into the tepee to tell her it had rained in the face of her baby. The mother seized the strapped youngster and bore him into the tent, chattering endearments after the fashion of Sioux mothers, and wiped the moisture from the face of the little round-eyed baby with the palm of her brown hand. The father of the child looked up from his reclining-place, fashioned of withes and fastened to two uprights and then to pegs in the ground, — a most comfortable easy-chair, — and said: —

"It is a sign. Let him be called Rain-in-the-Face."

The soft Sioux syllables in which the name of the child was pronounced may not be rendered in vulgar English, but they sounded good to the mother, and the father, proud of his inventive inspiration, proclaimed the boy's name and made a feast, as he had on other occasions when he named the five brothers who had preceded Rain-in-the-Face into the world, and who called him father, but who were not all nurtured at the same mother's breast.

Thus it was that so trivial a thing as a summer shower gave to a chief of the Hunkpapa Sioux a name that is not unknown, and there was, until September, 1905, an old man sitting by the door of his house on the Standing Rock reservation who would answer to the name and say that many great men of the white race called him friend — which was true enough, for, since the Sioux put away the tomahawk and forgot the warpath, their head men and chiefs have come to be highly regarded by the sub-chiefs of the Great Father.

Indian nomenclature has always had a fascination for the English-speaking people of this country, and has afforded a fine field for the smaller wits. The boys of a generation ago will remember how they rolled with boyish relish the names of the redskin heroes, Red Horse, Blue Dog, and Ghost-that-comes-Out, on their tongues, and felt that worthies with such names must needs be famous warriors. Later in life they came to conceive the idea that these appellations were born of the imagination of the novel-writer. As a matter of fact, the names are common enough, and there have undoubtedly been many Red Horses and Blue Dogs among the Indians. As for the variations on Ghost, they are so manifold as to be quite without the possibility of enumeration. White Ghost, Gray Ghost, Bull's Ghost, and Ghost-that-Runs are Sioux names that have been attached to official papers, and it is to be expected that Ghost should be common enough in the designation of a people who frequently take their names from dreams and who dream much of the shadowy people who have gone before.

But the commoner names of Indians generally have reference to personal attributes or achievements or experiences. It does not follow that the constant recurrence of the use of animal names has direct reference to the constant engagement of Indians in the chase. Ordinarily the use of the designation of the bear or the eagle or the horse is the house, or family, totem. A family will take for its totem the bear or the beaver, and to that house the animal so chosen is sacred, and the members of the family are recognized as belonging to the particular clan indicated. It was customary to use this family or house designation as a part of the cognomen, however, and the practice of avoiding mention of the personal name in the presence of the individual bearing it, is undoubtedly the reason for the common use of the terms brother, father, mother, among persons not at all related. This latter practice has led to a queer jumbling of the degrees of relationship, and the Indian of to-day even will call his cousin his brother or his sister, and any person whom he holds in particular esteem, his father, or mother. A great deal of trouble has been met in establishing actual relationship by reason of this custom.

It is not an uncommon thing for an Indian to bear during different periods of his life several names, as progressive events dominate his experiences. Among the Sioux it is a common practice to call the first-born, if a son, Caska (Chaska), or Winona, if a daughter, and designate additions to the family in the numerical order of their arrival. In the bestowal of these infantile names there is no ceremony, and many youthful Indians have struggled through early life without any sort of name, except the designation of the son or daughter of So-and-So when occasion required.

The bestowal of names among those Indians who used a common designation was formerly accompanied by a religious ceremonial and dance, but the practice has fallen into disuse. Among the Sioux there is no family patronymic whatever and it is conceivable that the greatest difficulty will be had in tracing families with a view to determining what designation shall be given members of one house. The work of giving the Sioux fixed and official names is now going on, and wide latitude is taken by the enrolling official. I do not know of a better example of the difficulty presented than in the case of the family of brothers to which Rain-In-The-Face belonged. There were six brothers in the family, and the name of the grandfather of these worthies is already lost in the mists of Indian antiquity—which is a mere matter of yesterday. The eldest of the brothers was Bear's Face; the others, in the order of seniority, were Red Thunder, Iron Horn, Little Bear, Rain-in-the-Face, and Shave Head. They were men of prominence, and each one of them who left children will be regarded as the founder of a family, and his children will carry his name with a prefix, as John Bear's Face, Mary Red Thunder, Charles Shave Head. It is optional with the official making the new enrollment to take the more appropriate or euphonious of the names of the brothers and make that the family name, — obviously a difficult matter in the case of these kindred families, each head being entitled to consideration as the founder of a distinct house, and there being nothing particularly euphonious in the English rendition of any of the names.

Many years ago, seeing the necessity for giving the people living at Standing Rock family designations, I undertook, as agent, the work that has recently been taken up by the Indian office. The Indians took kindly enough to the official designations given them arbitrarily but in accord with good sense. Gray Eagle, for instance, had several children. I gave those of them who did not possess a baptismal name an English name, then wrote the father's name in one word, Grayeagle, and the thing was done. And this practice I put into effect generally, retaining the English translation of the Indian name and making one word of it wherever possible. The rolls at Standing Rock agency were found to be practically complete when the enrolling official began his work there, the people being enrolled as families.

The utter impossibility of adhering to the English rendition of many of the Indian names is obvious enough, but in these cases it is nearly always possible to adopt the Sioux version, or some contraction of it that will serve to preserve a suggestion of the origin and retain in its proper place some reminiscence of the peculiar structure of the Indian nomenclature. It would be nothing less than an outrage to impose arbitrarily the name of Sam Jones upon a man whose father had distinguished himself as Young-Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses; still, the impossibility of retaining the English form of the Indian name is plain, — Tasunka-Kokipapi, the Sioux rendition of the name, being vastly different in its meaning from the translated form, and some contraction of it might be retained.

And this brings me to one feature of the Indian nomenclature that is worthy of attention — the misleading character of the translations. Tasunka-Kokipapi is by no means to be rendered "Young-Man-Afraid--of-his-Horses." I do not know that the translator could have gone much further astray from the meaning of the name, if he had tried. The name implies a tribute of great esteem on the part of the Indian for the man who bore it, the meaning of Tasunka-Kokipapi indicating one whose capacity in battle was such that the mere sight of his horses inspired fear in his enemies. Many of the Indian names are quite as far removed in their original application from the meaning conveyed by the translation as the appellation cited.

The simplest events and the most remote and least understood manifestations of nature, personal attributes of mind and the most vulgar of actions, physical beauty and physical prowess, all these are drawn upon to supply the Indians with names; yet the variety and appositeness of meaning of the names proves the possession of an imagination that does not suffer by comparison with that of the cultured races. The vulgarity of many of the appellations is in the translation only, though the Indian is rather prone to call a spade a spade. It is worthy of note, too, that the names of women, with which the English-speaking people are not so familiar as with the names of men, are quite frequently indicative of a poetic fancy and contain real beauty. And this is almost directly traceable to the fact that the translations have been made by teachers in the boarding-schools, sisters of the mission teaching-staff, or women teachers in the other schools. There is a range of fancy that bespeaks loving care or inspiration in the selection of the name of Beautiful-Voiced Antelope, and it rather jolted my fancy when I found that the lady so designated was fated to be styled on the rolls of the white man as Mrs. Bad Bull.

It is a regrettable fact that many of the women who enjoy names the mere mention of which suggests feminine daintiness, do not look the part suggested by the name. One of the least prepossessing of the Indian women in my recollection was called Beautiful Fawn. On the other hand, there is real appreciation — in the Indian method of expression — in the name given a woman of the Hunkpapa, Beautiful White Cow. She must have been a fine-looking woman in her youth, but she is Mrs. Spotted Horn Bull now, and there is no incongruity between her name and her position as a widow.

Obviously the names of the women are applied in a complimentary sense. They very rarely suggest an event, but nearly always indicate an attribute, poetic or other, and suggest a very warm imagination and wide license on the part of the sponsor. There was at Devils Lake agency, in my time, a man called Beautiful-Voice-at-the-Water. He came by the name by reason of the fact that, as a child, he was given to declaring that he could hear a voice calling him from the lake — and no Indian would think of disputing anything in the line of the supernatural regarding Devils Lake, its waters, and the mysterious country surrounding it. The place teemed with mystic sounds, symbols, and signs for the Indians. A certain poverty in the English rendition spoils the poetry of the Indian feminine name, because many of them are necessarily translated with the prefix of "beautiful" or "pretty," neither word quite conveying the meaning of the variously applied "was-te" (pronounced washta). Pretty Day, Pretty Dawn, and Pretty Star are English versions of names that really mean a great deal more than is conveyed by the inane word "pretty."

In the soft accents of the Sioux syllables there is much beauty when their accents are accommodated to pronounce the name of a woman, and it is to be hoped that the Indian names will be preserved so far as possible in fixing the designations of the copper-colored clubwomen of the future. Of the names purely fanciful, or having an exaggerated poetic suggestion, I know of few more truly feminine than Mini-ate-ho-waste-win, Beautiful-Voice-at-the-Water, and I would register now a protest against the corruption of this into the almost inevitable Minnie. Wiyan-Waste sounds in the Sioux as though it might describe a pretty woman, and it is literally, "Pretty Woman," a common enough name. Tipi-Waste-Win is a tribute to the woman's housewifery and means Pretty Lodge-Woman. An appreciation of an ornament belonging to a girl might readily procure for her a name — as in the case of Pompeska-Waste-Win, Pretty Shell-Woman; and a girl who was a "cute" baby was given the name of Onk-to-mi-Ska-win, White Spider. There is a poverty of imagination suggested in the name of Scarlet Day, applied to a woman, but it is not a rare designation, though it sounds much better in the Sioux — An-patu-Duta-win. The name arose from the fact that the bearer of it was first called Day, and then given the qualification because the sponsor was desirous of conveying the idea that the child was lovely — scarlet being the most highly prized of the colors and calculated to gladden the eye. That the Indian did not always condescend to frivolous compliment in naming his female relatives is demonstrated by the fact that the name Wamb-duska is common enough and is not nearly so pretty as the sound might imply, meaning Snake.

Sitting Bull came by his name, as previously stated, by right of succession and by a means not rare. He was called as a boy Jumping Badger, his father's name being Sitting Bull. While still a boy he distinguished himself in the field, and his father, making a feast, solemnly transferred his name to his hopeful son. This feast incidental to the bestowal of a name is one of the features of the social life of the Indian. Any Indian will regard it a mark of distinction to be invited to give a name to his neighbor's child. I have not observed that there is any ceremonial rite attaching to the function; it is simply a gathering of the families at a feast, and the bestowal of the child's name is merely an incident to the feast. Speaking of Sitting Bull reminds me, somehow, of the name of a man of good heart and distinguished title, — Shell King, Pompeska-yatapi, and how fortune frequently favored Sitting Bull, even as it did when he won the right to bear his father's name by his sharpness.

Shell King was a man of prominence at Standing Rock agency, and stood opposed to the baneful influence of Sitting Bull. He had been out with the hostile chief, but had left him, and came in under Crow King. One day, after the return of Sitting Bull from his imprisonment at Fort Randall, in the spring of 1884, Shell King met Sitting Bull in my office at the agency. Sitting Bull was inclined to sneer at Shell King for the latter's evident disposition to behave himself. He jeered at him for so easily adapting himself to the ways of the white man and doing the bidding of the officials. Shell King retorted in a fashion that astonished me and awed the listening Indians. He told Sitting Bull that he was a coward and that he had led his people into misfortune, causing them the loss of their arms and horses, and many hardships he charged to him; adding that the days of his dominion were over and that the people might act as they liked without consulting him. This defense elicited mysterious threats from Sitting Bull. Ten days later Shell King and one of his sons were killed by lightning, and the event had a tremendous effect in restoring the waning prestige of the old medicine chief, to whose influence it was credited.

Grass, the name of the ablest orator and most influential surviving chief of the Sioux, is the hereditary patronymic of a line of chieftains. The line will die out with the present possessor of the name, John Grass, who has no sons living, — his son, young John Grass, who was a bright young man, having died some years ago when about twenty-eight years of age. Grass, the father of the present John Grass, was a chief of the Blackfeet Sioux and a man of wide influence. He was a friend to the whites always and was himself a chief by descent. The headship of the band went to his eldest son, and to him the army officers gave the Christian name of John, so long ago that it was fixed upon him long before I became acquainted with the man. The Indian version of Grass is Piji, and John Grass is so called by his people.

Gall, the warrior chief of the Hunkpapas, was called Pizi, literally Gall. The meaning of the name was misconceived by the earlier translators, and when I knew him first his name was written by the whites as Gaul. This I corrected. He got the name as a boy, his mother bestowing it when she found him one day eking out his uncommon short rations by discussing the gall of the animal killed by one of their neighbors.

Whatever of distinction attaches to the name of Gall was attained by himself, who led the fighting men of the Sioux at the battle of the Little Big Horn. Gall's paternity was not distinguished, and he was a waif, brought up in the lodges of his people by a widowed mother. He became a chief by force of his personality.

Big Head, a man of some distinction among his people, will suffer in history by reason of the weakness of the interpreter who first gave his name to the whites. He was named not Big Head, but Big Brain, in compliment to his intellectual capacity, and a poor translator gave him the name he is known by. So also in the case of another Indian who will go down to fame as Big Road. His Indian name was Broad Trail, but an interpreter of limited vocabulary sheared him of his more euphonious title.

Spotted Tail, a noted chief of the Brule Sioux, suffered necessarily in the translation of his name, which sounds much more imposing in the original form of Sinte-Gleska. I have heard that he took the name from a peculiarity of a favorite pony of his boyhood.

A favorite horse was frequently the source of the Indian's name, Red Horse, Blue-Haired Horse, and High Horse being well-known Sioux names. Little Wound was a Sioux chief whose appellation suggests the injury that bestowed it; while a physical characteristic was obviously responsible for the designation of Wasicun-Waukautuya —Tall White Man. Crazy Walking, a judge of the Indian court at Standing Rock, took his name from his gait, and Running Holy combined a religious tendency with a disposition for swift movements. Afraid-of-Soldier is another Indian who suffered in his name by the translation, for his Sioux title indicated that the soldiers feared him, and should be translated, Their-Soldiers-fear-Him.

Not infrequently the feminine influence dominated in giving a man or a boy his name, and there was no end of Good Boys and Bad Boys. Very recently I was present at an Indian dance at the Sisseton agency, a leading part in which was taken by a very ancient personage who was known on the roll as Bad Baby. He was at least seventy-five years of age. At Standing Rock there is a man named Married-to-Santee-Woman, a designation that does not help the Indian reputation for imagery in his nomenclature.

The universe is drawn upon in the naming of the

Indian. The sun, the moon and its phases, the stars, the animal kingdom, the physical forms of the earth, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the rivers and lakes have all contributed to the naming of them, and it is a matter of regret that the exigencies of the times will presently snuff out this romantic feature of Indian life. But the utter impossibility of a person named He Dog attaining success as the leader of cotillions will appeal to the greatest stickler for the preservation of Indian names. I believe, however, that a great part of the individual nomenclature of the Indians may be preserved in case the custom I adopted at Standing Rock is generally, and wherever possible, followed, and names formed by eliminating the hyphens in compound names.

The Indian himself will presently begin to feel the need of a simpler system, now that he has come to understand that he cannot get along by adopting the persons he is talking to into his family. Among themselves the aborigines still use the terms of relationship — and that often without regard to the degree of consanguinity. In addressing others, he will mention his own name, speaking in the third person, but will call his hearers father, mother, brother, cousin, brother-in-law, son, and daughter. They are very fond of their relatives generally, though the brother-in-law seems to have the greatest portion of the esteem of the Indian, and is the only one of his relatives with whom he can joke and who is supposed to take the jokes in good part. The brother-in-law is also supposed to stand in the relation of providence to the needy, and to be ready at any time to sacrifice himself and his goods for the behoof of the man who married his sister. And the term grandfather is held in such veneration that the Sioux have no other name to designate the rock which serves the purpose of an altar in certain rites, and upon which the most solemn oaths are taken.

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JOHN GRASS

THE WINTER CAMP, (Crow)
Edward S. Curtis Photo

CHAPTER XIV

INDIAN SYMPATHIES

Ghosts and Devils enter largely into the Simple Faith of the Red Man.

It is "bad medicine" to ask an Indian of the Sioux nation — or of any other tribe, for the matter of that — if he is sick. He is likely to become impressed with the idea that the question is inspired by the bad spirit, or that the person asking is by way of working a spell on him. There is no sort of doubt that the mere asking of this question, which among whites might be regarded as being inspired by kindly solicitude, has caused many a man of the Teton Sioux to take to his bed, or what answers him for a bed, and make ready for his latter end. I have no doubt that many have died of an imaginary illness brought on in this fashion. And many of them have thought better of it when the external evidences of their coming decease were brought before them. But they prepare for death with much more elaboration of detail than they prepare for a birth or a marriage. Indeed, in his native state the Indian gave no thought at all to the imminence of a birth, and very little to a coming marriage. But when death impends, it is not only the fated victim who makes ready, but all his relatives and friends go into the matter with some spirit, and ease the poor man and his family of any little tangible property they may be possessed of, to the end that they may not be distracted in their grief by earthly concerns.

To be as "sick as a dog" but feebly expresses a condition of desperate health. One might declare he was "sick as an Indian," and mean something. I have always consistently forborne to make light in any way of the fancies of the Indian. He is a grown-up child in his regard for the things that he does not understand. To him the earth, the skies, the waters — every animal, bird, and fish, all created things — stand for that which he does not understand and which he, therefore, endows with supernatural attributes. The animals are his brothers, and that animal which is the totem of his house or clan he regards with veneration, and will under no circumstances kill or take for food. Living for centuries under conditions which filled the night with menace to his safety, he has come to people the darkness with the ghosts of his forefathers, and no amount of physical courage will bring the average uncultured Indian to move about in the dark with ease of mind. This constant thought of the unseen powers has had an important bearing on the development of Indian character. His fear of death is a purely physical manifestation, — the repugnance of the flesh, — for he regards the putting off of the mortal parts, under proper conditions, as a means of promotion to his idea of bliss; a happy land wherein the ghosts of men hunt the ghosts of buffaloes, in a country where the climate is altogether desirable and the game plenty. The Indian is rather shy of trying to go too far into a field that he does not understand, and he simply will not consider the question, whether the slaying by the ghost of a man of the ghost of the buffalo puts an end to the animal ghost, or whether there is born at once the ghost of a buffalo ghost.

The higher criticism is not part of the Indian's field of exploitation. He has some idea of a hell, but I am convinced that this is borrowed from the white man. It is undefined, seldom referred to, and is described according to the location on earth of the Indian. If he happens to have his being in a climatic condition wherein the cold weather causes him the most physical discomfort, his hell is a place where winter reigns perpetual, where game cannot live, and the horrors of a fireless tepee are ever present. If he happens to live in a hot arid country, his hell is a place of eternal heat, where grass cannot grow, and of great scarcity of water.

To this hell the Indian consigns only his enemies. His moral code is not so adjusted as to be sustained by the system of rewards and punishments prescribed by the believers in the religions of oriental origin. In his simple way he arranges a heaven to his liking, for his own occupation, and does away with the necessity for carrying his troubles beyond the grave, by sending his enemies to hell.

The Indian is by no means an ancestor-worshiper. He acknowledges that the ghosts are having a joyous time, and he has a great regard for those ghosts in the abstract, but he does not desire to see or hear from them while he is still in the flesh. And, as I have no disposition to invade the field so earnestly cultivated by the learned gentlemen who have provided the Indian with a system of theology and a rich mythology, — which will assuredly astound the Indian when he is far enough advanced in the arts of civilization to become acquainted with these of his beliefs by reading the books of the white man, — I will avoid attempting to go into abstractions on aboriginal beliefs. This much it may be permitted to say: the ceremonial religious rites of the Indian, the few myths he knows of, his idea of hell and other essential attributes of what may be called his religious system, — if so indefinite a thing may be called a system, — all these things suggested to me long ago that he is largely indebted to the earlier white missionaries for these amplifications of an original faith which had no depth other than a belief in a good spirit who might be depended on to exert a benign influence, — and who, therefore, required no propitiation, — and an evil spirit, variously manifested, that must be propitiated by sacrifice or circumvented by artifice. I have not studied Indian beliefs deeply, but I have heard of many myths attributed to the Indians, and I never yet knew an Indian to hold to one that was not analogous to some fabled story of our own classics. It has always seemed to me that the white men who first associated with the Indian, entertained their red friends by telling them stories that would appeal to their undeveloped minds, and that, to do this, the story-tellers drew on the stores of their own memories. The Indian myth is simply the classic fable fitted to local conditions.

All of which is beside the subject-matter.

The Indian mother puts ashes on the mouth of her babe to keep the child from being occupied or influenced by the spirit-friends from whose company he has lately come. The Indian of mature years, wise according to his lights, puts food and drink close to the grave of his dead relative, to keep the newly made ghost from bothering about the village at night, — this quite as much as with a view to providing the departed with provision for his trip to the happy spirit-land. The closer the Indian is to nature, the more nearly is he a spiritualist, and the fakirs among the medicine men frequently pretend to be in correspondence with the spirits. Sitting Bull professed to receive messages from the spirits by means of persons who had become unconscious through the rigors of the prescribed rites during the ghost-dancing craze.

It has frequently happened that the elaboration with which an Indian approaches death, and the freedom from mental cares that follows upon the completion of the preparations, effects a cure of the bodily ailments from which he has been suffering. I was reminded of a case in point during my last visit to Standing Rock, when an old Indian woman, nearly blind and very infirm, called to talk to Mrs. McLaughlin about her troubles. Arrow Woman was the name we knew her by, years ago when my wife taught her how to cook and care for a house. She was working in the agency kitchen in 1882, and rapidly becoming an expert in domestic affairs, and we thought very well of her. One day an Indian gossip arrived at the back door of the house and told Arrow Woman that her uncle was dead. She sat herself down in the midst of her pots and pans and gave herself up to mourning. My wife inquired what the matter was, and Arrow Woman told her that her heart was broken,— her uncle was dead. She had only gotten the news from an Indian gossip, and I did not believe it was true. I sent out and found that the old man was alive, and told Arrow Woman the fact.

"Well," she said, "he has been spoken of as dead, and he must die. I will go to him."

Mrs. McLaughlin was as anxious as myself to break up the Indian superstitions that stood most in the way of their civilization, and she went with Arrow Woman to the camp of her uncle. The old fellow, named Little Soldier, was laid out in a tepee. He had a house, but with the Indian's indisposition to die between four walls, he had made his people take him out into the open. In his tepee he lay, his face painted vermilion; at his head sat one of his wives, at his feet the other. He was quite resigned. Outside, his relatives had gathered, and a numerous tribe they were. They were on hand to seize on the possessions of the family as soon as the life was out of the body of Little Soldier.

Mrs. McLaughlin was given the place of honor in the tepee — the seat opposite the opening into the lodge. She asked the old man, who was breathing with difficulty and obviously making every effort to die, what ailed him. He replied: —

"It has been told that I am dead. The ghosts await me and I must go."

He actually had no disease, and even fewer than the ordinary infirmities of age.

The visitor suggested that what he needed was food and cheering up.

"I have no teeth in my stomach," he said, "and my heart is sad. But I want one thing from my white friend."

"What is that you want?"

The old fellow sat up and looked a little more cheerful — which did not serve to prepare his visitor for what was coming.

"All my life have I been the friend of the white man," said the moribund one. "I have no white blood on my hands" — and he held out his bony fingers smeared with vermilion, with which his face was painted. "Those hands are clean. My heart has been good to the white brother, and what the agent has advised, that have I done. It has been hard sometimes, but I have made the white man's way my way, and often have I hungered. Now, I would die decently and be buried as a white man. I want a coffin. I have said all."

Mrs. McLaughlin told him that should he die, he would have a coffin to be buried in. The following morning, his son, Little Dog, brought the measurement of his father for the promised coffin, stating that he was dead. I directed the carpenter to make the coffin, which was promptly attended to, but when it was finished, Little Dog could not be found to take it to his camp, and, upon inquiry, it was learned that Little Soldier was still alive.

The year was a hard one on the "hostiles." The men and women and children who had been out with Sitting Bull, were very far gone with poverty and disease when they came in, and they died at a rate that kept me at my wit's end. They were given what treatment was possible and fed as well as the means provided would allow. But they feared the white man's medicine, and their own medicine men were powerless. They were too far gone to be recovered by the means of food, and deaths were frequent — so frequent that the agency carpenter was kept quite busy making rough pine coffins for their burial. The coffin which was made for Little Soldier, after having been kept for three days, expecting his son to call for it, was given to Big Road, one of the late hostiles, for the burial of one of his two wives who had died that morning.

Some injudicious relative told Little Soldier that the coffin made for him had been given to Big Road for the burial of his wife, and upon Mrs. McLaughlin visiting him the following day, she found him in high dudgeon over it. He said, "All my life I have been a friend to the whites, and I feel much grieved to know that another lies in the coffin which was made for me, and more especially, as the person occupying it was an enemy of the Great Father."

Mrs. McLaughlin consoled the old man by promising him that she would see to it that he would have a nice coffin when he died, and that she would have it lined with bleached muslin. This assurance pleased Little Soldier very much, and when he died, a few weeks later, the muslin-lined coffin was forthcoming, which was regarded by the relatives and friends of the old man as a mark of great distinction, and they were not reticent in the matter of expressing their pride and admiration for the dead man, who stood so well with the agent as to have such a handsome coffin furnished him.

In the late seventies, while I was still agent at Fort Totten, Mrs. Standing Elk was painted for death. She was about middle age, and some one said of her that she was sick. Wherefore she lay down to die. She first put her house in order and then she moved out of it into the tepee that was set up near at hand. Not that the tepee was such a rare place of residence in those days — or in these days either, for the matter of that. The tepee is the institution to which the red people cling with most affection, and even among the Indians living on allotments, one will see but few houses which have not standing by, and occupied in the summer, the tepee, that may be so readily transported, when the red man takes his family and goes visiting his relations — which he does with great enthusiasm when an opportunity presents itself; and if the opportunity does not present itself, he will compel it, for there never were people like my red friends to go visiting.

So that when Mrs. Standing Elk felt that her time was come, she lay down in the tepee and told Standing Elk that her end was at hand. Standing Elk made no attempt to dissuade her. She had been a good wife to him, but she had come to the borderland of the country of the ghosts, and it was not for him to dispute the time of her going.

"I want a coffin," said Mrs. Standing Elk. "Go to the father at the agency and tell him. And I would have a coffin that will fit me. It is not well that a woman should lie in a coffin made for a man."

Standing Elk was the lord of his household, according to the custom of his people, but he had lived with Mrs. Standing Elk for many years, and there had been but one voice in that household, and that was not always the voice of Standing Elk. So he got together, with much labor, a measure made up of pieces of knotted cord, and he measured Mrs. Standing Elk as she lay in the tepee. And with the knotted string he came to the agency and said to me: —

"Father, my wife will die to-day, and she wants a coffin from you."

I asked him what the ailment was, and he said, "Just nothing, but that she had heard the ghosts calling and must go."

There was no use combatting that logic, so I had the carpenter make a coffin according to the measurements of the knotted string, which the prospective widower took home with him, seated on the casket.

Now it had taken some time for the making of the coffin. The carpenter was not a fast workman, and Standing Elk had been unconscionably delayed. Mrs. Standing Elk had become impatient. She was all ready to go and did not like the idea of being delayed. But she would not go without a sight of the coffin the white father was to provide for her. She could not lie in the tepee and wait for the coming of Standing Elk, but would sit without. And there she sat, her face painted for death and her relatives grouped about her, expectant. Still Standing Elk delayed, and her impatience gave way to vexation. When the husband of her lodge arrived, late in the evening, with the coffin, she was mad, and getting up, she berated him for a laggard. When the coffin was taken from the cart and stood on the ground, on end, she stood beside it and found it was taller than she. Standing Elk was given a scolding, the group of relatives dispersed, the old lady carried the coffin into the house on her shoulder, and when I left Fort Totten several years later, the coffin still stood on end in the house of Standing Elk. Shelves had been fitted into it, and it was doing duty as a cupboard.

Henry Agard, as will be suggested by the name, was rather a progressive Indian from the first. And he was fairly well-to-do, as things went on the Standing Rock reservation. He had a substantial house, and his wife was as progressive in most things as her husband. And they lived in peace for many years, and that peace was not disturbed when Agard's wife fell ill and told Henry that she was about to die. That she was ill was not to be doubted, but the announcement by herself of her impending death was undoubtedly precipitated by the gossip of the people, which told that she was sick. When she heard this, she told her husband to go and buy a coffin.

I have said that Agard was well-to-do for an Indian. He had some horses and cattle and had raised some crops — not many, or very large, but some. And his credit was good, — a condition quite as frequently to be met with among those Indians who have not taken allotments, and with them the expenses and airs of citizenship, as among those who are privileged to put their money on the bar, after the fashion of the white man. But if he had not been rich, according to his station, Agard was quite enough of an Indian to spend all he had in order to bestow the most expensive and elaborate mortuary honors on his spouse. Therefore it was not a matter to cause comment when Henry Agard sent away and bought a sixty-dollar casket for his wife.

When the coffin arrived, the Indians of the reservation gathered from far and near to behold the casket that the opulence of Agard had provided for his dying wife. He was pointed to by Indian wives as a pattern husband, one who did not scruple to do justice to a good wife. And Mrs. Agard participated in the enjoyment of the good thing that had been provided for her final delectation and her long home.

The coffin was taken into the sick room, for she lay in her bed in the house yet, and death was not near enough to cause her to desire to be taken into the open. The coffin was set before her, and the people went freely into the sick room to talk with her of her good fortune in possessing so handsome an equipment for the grave. And she, forgetting the mortal character of her ailment and the calling of the ghosts, sat up and received the congratulations of the people with pleasure. And so cheered were her spirits, that she could not bear to die and lose sight of the handsome piece of furniture that enriched her house, and she kept the coffin within sight and proceeded to mend in her health, so that it was not long before she could sit up and take nourishment; but she died within a few months, and was buried in the coffin which she had so much admired.

CHAPTER XV

PERMANENT INDIAN VILLAGES

Fortified City of a Northern Tribe whose Language suggests Welsh.

Eight or nine hundred years ago — this is not a matter of personal recollection, for I am taking the words of the ethnologists for the statement — a company of adventurous Welshmen landed somewhere on the South Atlantic coast and planted a colony. Of this there seems to be little doubt — and as little tangible proof. The Welshmen, not having the instinct for conquest that marks their descendants and relatives of to-day, or, perhaps, finding the conditions in this country to their liking, appear to have developed the capacity of the French pioneers in the northwest for assimilation with the native peoples, for they never went back to Wales, but became, in some sort, the ancestors of a tribe of Indians which left its impress on the country from the coast of the Carolinas to the Missouri River country north of Bismarck. For the Mandans are thought by some writers to be the descendants of the lost Welshmen. Some philologists have endeavored to prove this to their own satisfaction, and it is said that the Mandans, to this day, retain in their vocabulary a great many distinctively Welsh words. About this there is no room for quarreling. A stranger meeting a Welsh word anywhere in the world would identify and classify it on the spot. Unhappily — but perhaps fortunately for them — the Indians never knew the art of writing the language, and there is no one among them who writes himself "Ap-Thomas," and they do not use a collection of l's in starting a word. But as before stated, it is said that they have many Welsh words in common use. And for hundreds of years they maintained physical and mental characteristics that have raised them above their fellows. The surviving members of the tribe — pitiably few in numbers — are still a superior sort of people, and no observer who has been among the northern Indians can have failed to note the distinguished characteristics of this strange people.

It is many years since I was brought into contact with them, and they were even then fallen far from the estate they once occupied. Driven before the white man, they had been forced into the country of the fierce and warlike Sioux, and their ranks had been frightfully thinned by war and disease. They lived then, as they do now, in neighborly fellowship with the Arickarees and Gros Ventres. With these latter tribes they had no blood connection, for the Gros Ventres are allied to the Crows; the Arickarees, related to the Pawnees, came from the south; and when, a generation ago, I was officially connected with the organization of a peace council between the Devils Lake Sioux on the one hand and the Rees, Gros Ventres, and Mandans on the other, these three latter tribes were living in perfect amity in what I believe was the last stockaded and permanent village inhabited by northern Indians. And strange to relate, it was not the Mandans, with the trace of European ancestry, who were responsible for the village, but the Arickarees. All of which reminds me of a story, and here it is.

In 1878 the Rees, Gros Ventres, and Mandans lived in a stockaded village, just above the agency at Fort Berthold on the Missouri River. The village had been there many years. The Rees had come up the Missouri River. They left at several points evidences of their occupation of the country in the remains of abandoned villages. When they crossed the Heart River and established themselves on the Missouri, they built a village that might afford them protection from their fierce neighbors, the Sioux. They were utterly unable to cope with the warriors of the Tetons without some sort of protection, and this protection they obtained by living within fortifications. They taught the Gros Ventres and the Mandans that it was possible to live in comparative comfort — if not in peace — by interposing solid barriers to the depredations of the Sioux.

The Mandans and the Gros Ventres, who had suffered in their persons and their herds from the Sioux, were glad to make common cause with the Rees, and they assisted in the building of the remarkable fortifications which stood on the banks of the Missouri until a very few years ago. They were unique in Indian architecture, so far as my knowledge goes. With an eye single to the possibilities of defense the Rees had chosen for the site of their village a bend of the river, where an abrupt angle in the course of the stream left an elbow-shaped tract of land with a comparatively narrow base, and the high banks of the river afforded ample protection on the river side of the village site. Across the base of the triangle, two sides of which were protected naturally, a stockade of logs had been built. This was a substantial structure of heavy timbers, the butts sunk well into the ground and the upper ends sharpened to points. Over the sally-port a watch-tower had been built, to command a view of the country, and defend the gate in case of attack. It was a complete defense to any attack that the Sioux might make with such offensive weapons as they had. A certain amount of genius in military engineering had been displayed, both in the selection of the site and in the construction of the defense of the place.

Much as I was astonished by the appearance of the stockade, I was even more surprised when I passed the barrier; for the Indians whom I had known had lived in tepees, wickiups, or houses fashioned after the plan of the white man. The houses occupied by the people inside the stockade were, in a general way, in the form of tepees, but they were enormously larger than tepees and were built of logs. Good-sized trees — for that country — had been used, and these were set into the ground perpendicularly, embracing a circle of twenty-five or thirty feet diameter. In the centre of the enclosed circle, four uprights were fixed at the corners of a square, and these, running to the roof, formed, when closed in, a chimney, and furnished support for the roof-timbers which were laid from the walls. The roof was covered with grass or rushes, and dirt thrown on; the chinks of the walls were plastered with mud. Attached to each of the buildings was a semicircular addition of considerable dimensions, proportioned to the size of the dwelling, and access to the house was had through this addition, which was used as a stable for their best ponies. For the Rees were fond of their horses. Moreover their neighbors, the Sioux, were also fond of the Rees' horses, and the Ree was disposed to take his best horses, racing and war ponies, into the very bosom of his family.

The houses were scattered about through the enclosures without regard to street lines, the village being in every respect similar to the Indian village of the plains, but that it was constructed of timber and that every house would contain twenty or thirty persons, all the members of a closely related family occupying a dwelling in common.

In this place at the time of my visit, thirty-one years ago, there dwelt some two thousand Indians, the Rees being the most numerous, with the Gros Ventres and Mandans strong in the order named. The community was governed by dog soldiers, head men, and chiefs of the tribes, but Son-of-the-Star, a Ree, was the head chief. The people retained their tribal characteristics to a certain extent, but long residence in the land of the Sioux had led them to adopt the Dakota as the common language, though among themselves they spoke the tribal language, the Gros Ventres speaking Crow, they being allied to that tribe.

Outside of the stockade were the agency buildings, the new agency quarters being something like a mile from the stockade; and a trader's store, owned by William Shaw of St. Paul, Minnesota, was located immediately outside the stockade sally-port, Mr. Shaw being quite indifferent as to whether he traded with the people inside the stockade or with the Sioux who might be engaged in the diversion of trying to knock the stockade down to the end that they might comfortably scalp the inhabitants.

There never had been much peace between the Rees, Gros Ventres, and Mandans of the alliance, and the Teton Sioux of the trans-Missouri country, for the Sioux continually hungered for the horses of the allies; but for many years there had been amity between them and my Indians of the Devils Lake Sioux, the Santees and Cut Heads. This amity had been jeopardized, even destroyed, by a couple of cunning white scamps who had evinced an insatiate desire for the horses of the Indian.

The allies within the stockade were in the habit, in time of peace, of grazing their ponies outside the stockade. They were comparatively rich in horses, and the pasturage within the gates was insufficient for their maintenance. One day in the spring of 1878 these two white men left their homes, up near the Canadian boundary on the Pembina River, and made a trip to the Missouri. They found the ponies of the allies and cut out fifty or sixty of them. The stolen stock they headed for the Fort Totten reservation, and, with the cunning of Indians, they left a broad trail that the owners of the stolen horses might follow. With malice aforethought, they put on moccasins of the shape used by the Devils Lake Indians and left a trail that a blind Ree could follow and would immediately recognize as that of a Cut Head. This broad trail, which was actually blazed by the occasional abandonment of a worn-out pony, led straight across the country to Devils Lake. On reaching the lake, the thieves made a détour, covered their tracks by taking to the road, and went off to the northeast, arriving in good time at Pembina with their booty.

In those days there was neither telegraph nor telephone in the country, but news traveled with incredible rapidity between reservations in a sparsely settled district. Word came to me of the theft of the horses, and the obvious intent of the thieves to fasten the crime on my Indians. I got into communication with the authorities, and the Devils Lake Indians were not long in finding out how the thieves had traveled and their evident intention to lead the Rees to think they had committed the depredation. I communicated with the agent, E. H. Alden, at Fort Berthold, and with the civil authorities, and the thieves were soon enough apprehended. The horses, however, or a great part of them, had been run across the line into Manitoba and sold.

The Rees and their allies were wild. That a band with whom they were at peace, and had long been, should deliberately steal their horses, involved an injury and insult that could be wiped out only with blood. At least they would show the Cut Heads and Santees that they could wipe the injury out in blood if they wanted to. A big party of them left the village by the Missouri and started across the country for Devils Lake.

At the bend of the Mouse River, they struck the camp of a mixed-blood from the Red River, one Joe Perronto. Infuriated at the loss of their horses, and without stopping to parley, they opened fire on the camp. Perronto was away on a hunting expedition, and only his wife and two children were in camp. The two children were killed and the woman wounded.

With their savage ardor cooled, perhaps, by this blood-letting, they crossed to the west end of the Devils Lake reservation, approached the camp of the unsuspecting Cut Heads, cautiously, and one morning a number of my Indians woke up to find that they were constructively dead: the Rees and their allies had crept into the camp during the night and touched the sleeping warriors with their coup-sticks.

In Indian warfare, he who touches another with his coup-stick is reckoned as the slayer of the one touched, whether he does the killing or not. To approach a sleeping enemy and touch him, then to leave a sign without the tepee in the form of certain sticks, would be equivalent to notifying the man upon whom the coup had been counted that he was dead, in that he only survived through the magnanimity of the enemy.

At the entrance to their lodges the Cut Heads found the sticks indicating what had happened. They mounted and followed the trail of the visitors for thirty miles, then came in and told me what had happened. Something must be done to avert further trouble, and I communicated with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and was directed to arrange for an understanding between the tribes about what had happened, and to bring about a peace council. Agent Alden — who, by the way, was a minister of the Presbyterian Church and who had been a very successful frontier missionary — was instructed to prepare his Indians for a council with the Devils Lake people, to the end that no misunderstanding might exist.

Thus it came about that, one day in July, 1878, I put myself at the head of a cavalcade of Santees and Cut Heads, six hundred men, women, and children, and started across the country for Fort Berthold. The settler had not yet come into that section of Dakota, and the prairie, carpeted with flowers, was still untouched by the plough that has since opened its virgin bosom. A queer outfit, that which I led out of the Devils Lake reservation, as it would look to-day if seen crossing the same prairie, now thickly settled. The Indians carried with them all the essentials for dressing for feasts, all their dancing regalia, and such things as they could procure for presents to their old friends on the Missouri. With carts, travois, and ponies, the procession strung out for a mile or more and moved leisurely along. There was some game in the country, and the hunters ranged ahead and to the north and south. The trail led along what had been the old military road established in the sixties, and along which the mail was carried up into Montana and Idaho. We passed Wook Lake, Dogs Den, and Strawberry Lake, and on to Fort Stevenson, which fort was still garrisoned, thence over to Berthold.

The Rees, Gros Ventres, and Mandans came out to meet my people, a great crowd of them, and the reception was hearty enough to satisfy the Cut Heads upon whom coups had been counted. Up to and within their stockade they led the visitors, to assure them that they were welcome to all the hosts had. The people fraternized easily enough, but nothing could be done without a council, and if one council was a good thing, several councils would be better. There was much feasting and a very great deal of talking. I told them in council of the earnest desire of the Great Father that his red children should dwell in amity, and explained that the ponies had been taken by white men, and proposed a formal treaty of peace. To this all agreed, but it would not comport with the Indian dignity to make the treaty too soon.

Son-of-the-Star, as chief of the allies and principal spokesman, told how sad his heart was when he thought with what bitterness he had regarded his brothers of the Sioux bands; how he grieved because his young men had killed the children of Perronto; and how firmly they would hold to the treaty about to be made. Crow's Breast, of the Gros Ventres, expressed pretty much the same sentiments, and so enthusiastic did the people become in their desire to make things right, that they rushed out, brought in their horses, and bestowed about fifty ponies on Perronto — who was on the spot ready to be surprised in case anything of this sort happened.

When my Indians left Berthold, the visited were practically broke. They fairly heaped presents on the visitors. Everything they could prevail on them to carry off, they gave, and the Sioux were too well acquainted with the Indian etiquette to risk insulting the others by refusing anything. They trailed out of camp at the end of the visit with their travois, carts, and ponies loaded with the evidences of good will that had been presented to them. In the name of friendship, the Rees, Gros Ventres, and Mandans had impoverished themselves, but it was "Indian giving," the trail to Devils Lake was opened, and there would be visiting again and the allies would not leave empty-handed.

The Ree village on the Missouri is long since abandoned, and the people are living in the fashion of the white man, the three tribes still living in amity and, perhaps, further advanced in the arts of civilization because of the fact that they are not all of one blood, with ideas peculiar to a single tribe. And the pipe of peace that was lighted in July, 1878, on the banks of the Missouri, has never since gone out.

INVOCATION (Oyalala Sioux)
Edward S. Curtis Photo

CHAPTER XVI

ON THE MAKING AND BREAKING OF TREATIES

Wherein it is shown that the Want of Good Faith on the Part of the White Man has had much Influence in making Bad Indians.

I am not an apologist for the Indian. I do not hold with those people who contend, and generally without much knowledge of the subject, that the red man has been pillaged, debauched, impoverished, and driven to desperation by the acts of the white man. In the nature of things, it must have come about that the Indian should go to the wall before the dominating influence of the white man. When the first white placed his foot upon the shores of this continent, it was predestined that he should come into the inheritance of the Indian. And there is no use quarreling with the processes of natural law. But I do know that the sins of the Indians are traceable to the avarice, the cruelty, the licentiousness of Wasicun, the white man. What he is, the white man made him — for in the Indian of to-day there is very little trace of that high spirit and cheerful independence which marked the aborigines upon whom the first comers are said to have fallen, as soon as was convenient after falling upon their knees and giving thanks for coming into the inheritance that had been held for them for many centuries by the natives.

I do not flatter myself that I am uttering an original truth when I say that the Indian has been made the object of speculative persecution by every white man who felt that he needed what the Indian possessed. The history of the country, east and west, was written in the blood of men and women who were just as certainly the victims, morally, of the men who made the Indians what they were, as they were literally the victims of the tomahawk. That is all past and gone; the last menace of an Indian uprising disappeared when Sitting Bull died. The Indian of to-day who is living at an agency, a moral pauper by reason of his dependency on the dole he receives from the government, waiting for enfranchisement by death or the development of some instinctive movement for self-preservation, or that other one, who is struggling to stand upright and alone among men, is handicapped in his efforts and his hopes by reason of the fact that he and his ancestors have been treated as liars and cheats, by liars and cheats, who wanted that which the Indian possessed.

A hundred years or so of governmental direction of the Indian, sometimes by cajolery, frequently by warfare, and occasionally by rational and fair treatment, has produced a being who is still a child in his understanding of our ways, our philosophy, and our knowledge of the necessity for "hustling" for what is desirable. That century of experiment and exploitation has ultimately effected this: it has placed about the Indian and his property sufficient restrictions to prevent him from being officially robbed, and it has secured to him an inheritance that is just sufficient to make him an unproductive loafer — unless he happens to be an individual of such strength of mind that he is the mental superior of his white neighbors. For some years the government has been engaged in converting the untutored savage of the sixties and early seventies into an inoffensive but irrational being, who cannot get used to the idea that he is a human entity, with his own salvation, moral and physical, to work out. And this condition the Indian has been brought to because he has been coddled by a lot of fool friends whose hands he bit, or chased like a wild beast by fighting men who understood him no better than those who coddled him.

It was a difficult task that was committed to the men who have been trying to work out the Indian problem of late years, — the task of bringing the Indian to a state that would permit of his assimilation by the American body politic. It has by no means been accomplished yet. As I have said elsewhere, I believe it will be accomplished soonest by giving the Indian his portion and letting him solve the problem himself. And how much easier that task might have been made, I have proved in my own experience, by telling him nothing unless I could tell him the truth, and then by standing by what I said to the very end. I have been asked how I have succeeded in retaining the respect and even regard of the Indians with whom I have been brought in contact. I may say now — and that without self-laudation, for many better and wiser men have failed — that I treated the Indian as an individual as nearly as possible as though he were a white man and capable of coping with white men with their own weapons. When I said I would do a thing, I did it, whether the Indian liked it or not; and more than once in my official life I have had to take a very long chance with the powers, in order to carry out my promise to the Indian without coming into conflict with higher authority.

And I believe, as I believe in my Maker, that, if I had not bound to myself and their duty the Indians whom I placed in positions of authority at Standing Rock, and who laid down their lives in doing their duty at the time of the ghost-dancing craze, the winter of 1890–91 would have seen an uprising in the Dakotas — perhaps throughout the West — that would have thrown into insignificance the Indian wars of the past.

The making of unfair treaties and the violation of treaty rights are the two things of which the Indian has most right to complain, and I am moved to tell something of the treaties, their uses and abuses, with the people among whom I have lived for so many years.

The Teton Sioux had always been used to a very wide range. Gifted academicians, who have studied the Indian in his history, have made it clear enough to us that the Sioux occupied a great extent of territory; and what little they have told us I am ready to accept, for I have found that it must have been gathered by patient research. It would have been of no use to question the Sioux himself, for the Sioux has no yesterday, and, the bookman to the contrary notwithstanding, he has no traditions. He does n't go back of his grandfather, and he does not appear to have accepted anything, even from that recent ancestor, except the tribal and religious ceremonial which applies in all the events of his life.

Over a vast tract of country the Teton Sioux ranged in historical times. The territory of Dakota, to which he gave the name of his nation, Dakota, — friends, — was his pasture and his hunting-ground, and he has been far removed from his allies and relatives, the Santees of the eastern bands, for many years. By the right of might and preëmption, the Sioux had a kingdom for his back yard and an empire for his pasture. For hundreds of miles he had a free hand, and knew no bound when he rode west through the buffalo grounds on the far side of the Missouri, until he stopped to reconnoitre the country of the Crows on the west, and the home of the Piegans, Bloods, and Blackfeet to the northwest.

Some speculative writer on Indian history has asserted that originally the Indian who lived by the chase required eight thousand acres for his subsistence, — a theory in which I do not concur, but which might have been true in the case of the bands of Tetons, for they might have taken allotments of that extent, every individual, and then had some land for sale. From the Missouri down to the Big Blue, north to the Canadian boundary, and west to the Big Horn Mountains and beyond, he roamed in indolent and lordly, if not very refined, leisure. Indeed, he had not paid much attention to these limitations until the government, by the convention of 1868, put him within bounds; and all the Teton Sioux treaties go back to this convention for a basis of agreement.

In 1867 Congress created a commission for the purpose of treating with the plains Indians, who had been carrying on a desultory warfare with the troops and the settlers for years. Dreadful atrocities had been perpetrated, and there is no manner of doubt that these atrocities were shared in by both whites and Indians. The conditions were such that it became necessary to remove the causes of war if possible, and to establish a *modus vivendi* which would preserve certain rights to the Indians, while giving the whites an opportunity to open up the country without exposing themselves to the imminent risk of attack by the Indians.

As members of this commission there were appointed eight men who were eminent in public life, and all more or less familiar with Indian affairs. They were Generals Sherman, Terry, Harney, and Auger, N. G. Taylor, Indian Commissioner, J. B. Henderson, chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, J. B. Sanborn, of St. Paul, Minnesota, and S. F. Tappan. The commission was well balanced, as to strong men, between the civilian and military elements, but was clearly dominated by General Sherman, who had but recently expressed himself as in favor of a policy of extermination against the Sioux. The other parties to the proposed treaties were not easy to come at, for the Indians feared they were to be trapped. But late in the year, treaties were made with the Kiowas, Comanches, Apaches, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes. The Sioux were more shy, and Red Cloud sent in word that he might come in the next spring.

The commission made a report, based upon, or inspired by, a council held at North Platte, in which this sentence is found: "If an Indian is to be trusted at all, he must be trusted to the full extent of his word." Which shows that the commission had arrived at a proper understanding of the people they were dealing with.

On the 29th of April, 1868, the commission met Red Cloud, with his Oglala and the Brule Sioux, at Fort Laramie, and concluded a treaty with them. The same treaty was submitted to and accepted by the head men of the Hunkpapa, Upper and Lower Yanktonais, Blackfeet, Two Kettle, Sans Arc, and Minniconjou Sioux, at various places along the Missouri River, during the summer.

The treaty with the Sioux gave them what was known as the Great Sioux reservation. It covered a tract approximating twenty-two million acres, and its boundaries were defined as follows: Commencing at a point where the 46th parallel of north latitude crosses the Missouri River, and continuing down the east bank of the river to the Nebraska line, thence west along the Nebraska line to the 104th degree of west longitude, north to the 46th parallel, and east to the Missouri River; and to include the reservations already provided on the east bank of the river.

It was also stipulated that the country north of the North Platte River and east of the Big Horn Mountains should be considered as unceded Indian territory, and that the Sioux should have the right to hunt in the lands north of the North Platte and on the Republican fork of the Smoky Hill River, so long as the buffalo continued to be numerous enough to warrant the chase. The further right of the Sioux to live the nomadic life was conceded by a stipulation giving the nomads an annuity separate and distinct from that granted to persons engaged in farming. The treaty was specific in conceding these points, also that no treaty for the cession of any portion or part of the reservation described should be of any validity or force against the said Indians unless executed and signed by at least three fourths of all the adult male Indians interested; and this should be kept in mind as having important bearing upon subsequent events. It is also worth observing that the commission, in making its report, said that the blame for wrongdoing in the past was directly traceable to the whites.

In this treaty it was provided that the government should, among other conditions, furnish to every man who settled with his family on the reservation a cow, a yoke of cattle, seed, and agricultural implements, to the value of one hundred dollars during the first year of his incumbency of the land taken, and the same to the value of twenty-five dollars a year for three years thereafter. There was an annuity provision for each individual, whether he settled or remained a nomad, and it was stipulated that a school and teacher should be furnished for each thirty children among the settled Indians, this latter provision to continue for twenty years after the ratification of the treaty.

It was a notorious fact that the government did not comply with the stipulation as to cows, oxen, seeds, and implements, in the cases of more than two thirds of the persons having a right to these supplies. As for schools, absolutely nothing was done during the first ten years of the twenty provided for.

At this late date it would be useless and unjust to uncover the motives of the persons who abused the rights of the Indians under the treaty of 1868. Under the peace policy proclaimed by General Grant in 1869, some attempt was made to conciliate the Indians and win them over by kindness, but their rights were ignored. It had been solemnly promised them that there should be no settlement in the unceded Indian lands without their consent. They had been promised the right to hunt in certain portions of the unceded lands. These rights were ignored in one case, and violated in the other, for settlers and gold-seekers went into the country, and the Indians roaming therein, under their treaty rights, were liable to be regarded as hostiles, — an order of General Sherman issued in June, 1869, stating that all Indians living within the limits of their reservations should be under the control and direction of the Indian agent, but that all Indians found outside of those limits might be treated as hostiles.

That these latter were so treated is not to be doubted. The Black Hills were exploited, not only by individuals, but under official direction, for in 1874 an expedition went into the Hills under General Custer and made a thorough exploration. The expeditior brought out the report that there was much gold in the Hills, and then there was a rush. The Indians made objection to the irruption of the whites, and Red Cloud, at a meeting with a commission at his agency in the summer of 1875, made formal protest against the country of the Sioux being invaded and the gold in their Hills being taken by white men. There were councils and commissions and depredations and retaliation until the winter of 1875, when it was decided by the authorities that the roaming Indians must be restrained; and notice was sent to the agencies of the Great Sioux reservation, in December, 1875, to communicate with Sitting Bull and other nomad chiefs, and give them to understand that if they did not report on the reservation before the end of the following month, war would be made on them.

Sitting Bull always denied ever having received any official notification of this intention of the government, and it is doubtful if he did. In any event neither that Chief nor Crazy Horse came in, and in February, 1876, General Crook took the field with a considerable force, to punish the hostiles. Of that campaign and its culmination on the Little Big Horn, I have treated elsewhere, but in September of that year a commission — of which the late Right Reverend Henry B. Whipple, of Minnesota, was a member — negotiated a treaty with the Sioux, which opened the Black Hills, though not materially changing the conditions of the treaty of 1868, except in so far as it required all the Indians to live on their reservation.

The limits of the reservation were restricted by making the 103d, instead of the 104th, meridian the western boundary on the Nebraska line, and cutting out the V-shaped tract included between the forks of the Cheyenne River. The Black Hills had been opened to the white man, but the price paid in the preliminary to the treaty was rather high, or might be considered so, if flesh and blood had a price. I am convinced now, and always have been, that if the peace policy inaugurated by President Grant in 1869 had been carried out, and the rights granted to the Indians by the treaty respected, there would have been no bloodshed. Knowing as I do the Indian character, I am convinced that the Sioux people would, if they had been treated with, have been content to permit the opening of the Black Hills country for a price.

And this, in spite of the fact that no people in the world cling with more tenacity to the soil from which they sprang. It may have been because they lived so very close to the land that they had for generations subsisted on the natural fruits and riches of, without cultivation; but whatever the cause, the Indian held to his hunting-ground as no civilized peoples have clung to their native soil. But even so long ago as the early seventies, the Sioux had recognized the fact that the white man was a superior power and that their only hope lay in wresting from the government the best terms possible for the country they must give up. They were reckless of consequences when they took to the war-path, but they did not choose the trail of death because of a taste for blood, in spite of the savagery they had developed under the treatment they had received. They were a simple people and very much under the control of their chiefs; and with a full knowledge of the fact that they were going to the wall, with the ambitions of Sitting Bull to prompt them, and the desire of revenge on the part of Crazy Horse to impel them to retaliation, it was not a difficult matter to organize them into the power that reached its height in the summer of 1876, and drove them in fear and trembling to the treaty made that fall, when they came to appreciate what their punishment would be if they did not give up possession of at least a part of their hunting-grounds.

And speaking of the campaign of 1876 and the means chosen by the whites to coerce the Indians to a surrender of their hunting-grounds, the late Bishop Whipple of Minnesota, a member of the treaty commission of the centennial year, said: "I know of no instance in history where a great nation has so shame fully violated its oath."

The opening of the Black Hills was, no doubt, necessary to the development of the country; it has added I don't know how many hundreds of millions of dollars to the wealth of the owners of the mines; it has given us that perennial delight, the city of Deadwood; but we might have had all that, and there might have been no graveyard to mark the spot where Custer and his men fell, — a last reminder of the obstinacy of a people who resisted when required to give up the rights vested in them by solemn covenant with the government, — had the Sioux been fairly dealt with.

It was prior to the signing of the treaty that the Indians of Standing Rock and Cheyenne River agencies were disarmed and dismounted, and the power of the Sioux broken. Many thousands of ponies were taken from the Indians at the two agencies, and the disarmament was complete so far as the agency Indians were concerned. The working out of the Indian problem might have been made much more simple if the government, after disarming and dismounting the people, — taking from them all hope of subsistence by the chase, — had made good the treaty promise of 1868 and given them the cows and oxen they were entitled to. It may be said, now, that the dismounting and disarming of these Indians was justified by the possibility that they might have left the reservation.

In 1882 an attempt was made by a commission composed of Governor Newton Edmunds, Judge Peter C. Shannon, and James H. Teller to secure an agreement with the Sioux for the purpose of cutting up the

Great Sioux reservation into separate reservations attached to the various agencies, and opening some fourteen thousand square miles of the Indians' lands to sale and settlement. The agreement failed completely, and this largely because an arousal of public sentiment, and the position of members of the Senate and the administration, stood in the way of a seizure of the Indian lands without the three-fourths consent, the consent of a few chiefs and their followers being held insufficient. The number of signatures agreeing to the proposed act was so absurdly small in proportion to the number of Indians concerned, that the President (Arthur) returned the bill and the agreement without recommendation, and stating that the commission had failed.

Out of this failure came the appointment of a Senate committee in 1883, the work of which has been of the highest importance to the Indians. At the head of this committee was Senator Henry L. Dawes, who gave his name to the commission which has so wisely administered the affairs of the five civilized tribes, and with him were associated Senators John A. Logan of Illinois, Angus Cameron of Wisconsin, John T. Morgan of Alabama, and George G. Vest of Missouri. The importance of a thorough investigation of the condition of the Indians, and the need for the wisest counsel in meeting and providing for those needs, were evinced in the personnel of the select committee. A sub-committee, consisting of Senators Dawes, Logan, and Cameron, went exhaustively into the conditions among the Sioux, and found that the people were opposed to the terms of the agreement proposed, stating so in their report, and declared that there was no possible justification for the further violation of treaty rights, as involved in the taking of the Black Hills. The report had the effect of putting a stop to further attempts of the sort for some years, and this condition obtained without anything more than a constant agitation among the people within the department and without, looking to a cutting up of the reservation.

At the time the Dawes Committee made its investigation, I was in favor of reducing the size of the reservation and of doing away with gratuities by the government, so far as possible. I was convinced that the way to wean the nomad from his habits was to make him a farmer, where the country was adapted to farming; if he was permitted to become a herder, he would retain too many of his old habits. And I told the committee that I would favor the Indian only when he had done something for himself, not gratuitously. If he built a house, pay him; if he cultivated a piece of land, reward him for his labor; and all these ends could best be realized by reducing the size of the immense tract upon which the Teton Sioux were placed.

It was in 1888 that the next commission was appointed, for the purpose of making a new agreement with the Sioux on the Great reservation. At that time I had been seventeen years among the Sioux Indians, and had come to know something of the Indian character and the sort of treatment that must be accorded the individual if the best results were to be obtained. I had been fortunate enough to secure the confidence of the Indians at Standing Rock, and I felt that I could carry them with me in any measure which I told them would be for their good. I had also come to a certain understanding of the fact that, whatever the Indian got for himself in the future, he must get by making the best of any bargain proposed by the government. I also knew and appreciated the fact that the time was near at hand when the country would need the superfluous Indian lands for the growing population. But I was determined that, so far as I could, within the limits of my official duty, I would counsel the Indians to reject any agreement that did not carry with it a fair compensation for any concessions that might be made.

In this frame of mind, I received the information that a commission, composed of Captain R. H. Pratt, of the Carlisle Indian School, Judge John V. Wright of Tennessee, and the Reverend William J. Cleveland of South Dakota, had been appointed to negotiate with the Indians and endeavor to procure an agreement with them for the cession of all lands west of the 102d degree of west longitude, and between the Cheyenne and White Rivers; these lands to be added to the public domain, and the Sioux to be compensated at the rate of fifty cents per acre for all disposed of, the money to be credited to the Sioux nation. A fund of a million dollars was to be set aside at once, and the provisions of the treaty of 1868 for the education of the Indians in the science of agriculture, and for other purposes, to be carried out, including the purchase of twenty-five thousand cows and one thousand bulls for distribution, and many other minor details.

The agreement proposed was not the sort of proposition I would make to a friend of mine, but the people who were pressing it did not regard the Indian in the light of a friend. I was made *ex officio* a member of the commission, for the purpose of conferring with and procuring the signatures of the Indians at the Standing Rock agency. I knew that the concessions the Indians were asked to make were immensely more valuable than was indicated by the compensation proposed; that I was bound in good faith to the Indians of the agency to advise them for their good. Still, I was a member of the commission and could not counsel the Indians to reject the proposals. I asked to be released from service on the commission, and Secretary of the Interior Vilas permitted me to withdraw. Being relieved as a member of the commission enabled me to meet more freely with the Indians as their agent, and, although I did not oppose it, they, being close observers, concluded that the provisions of the act did not meet my views, and the longer the commission remained at the agency, the more pronounced the Indians expressed themselves in opposition; and after remaining thirty-two days at Standing Rock, the commission left for the lower agencies without having accomplished anything other than solidifying the Indians in opposition to the act.

I have not hitherto stated my position in the matter, but I thought then and still think that I was justified in not aiding the commission to any greater extent, and in doing that which I regarded was best for the people who looked upon me as their adviser. But it put me in a delicate position, for it was very clear that Secretary Vilas and other influential members of the administration were very desirous that the act be ratified by the Indians. I, also, was desirous of an agreement that would permit the lands not necessary for the support of the Indians to be utilized; but I was the agent for the Standing Rock Indians, and knew that they were not offered any sort of fair compensation, and was convinced that a further trimming of their possessions would set them back by producing in them a sullen disposition. I had conceived the idea that the Indian had rights, and that those rights, if recognized, would inure to the good of both the white man and the Indian. It was certain that an agreement would be accomplished on some terms, and that very shortly, but that the public interest would suffer no material wrong if the consummation of the agreement were postponed for a year or two.

The agreement received but a few signatures at Standing Rock, and fared little better at the lower agencies, while three fourths of all the Indians must give their consent to make the act operative. There were councils at Standing Rock, Crow Creek, and Lower Brule agencies, and subsequently a general council, attended by the head men of the various agencies, at Lower Brule, and here it became evident that there was no hope of getting anything like the necessary signatures. Captain Pratt communicated with the Secretary of the Interior, and the agents were ordered to return with their delegations to their respective reservations.

I took my people and returned home, to find an order there, dated October 3, 1888, directing me to proceed with a delegation of fourteen Indians and an interpreter to Washington City, meeting delegations from the other agencies at Chicago; and on the night of October 14, the great chiefs of the Sioux nation were together in Washington. I had taken with me from Standing Rock, John Grass, Gall, Mad Bear, and Big Head. These men had been the speakers for the Standing Rock people at the councils, and Grass had established for himself a great reputation as a lawyer and catechist, meeting and parrying all the interrogatories of the commission, and frequently stumping the members by his knowledge of the Indian laws and treaties. The other members of my delegation were Sitting Bull, Two Bears, High Bear, Walking Eagle, Fire Heart, Thunder Hawk, Bear's Rib, Gray Eagle, Hairy Chin, and High Eagle, with Louis Primeau as interpreter.

The Cheyenne River delegates were White Swan, Charger, Swift Bird, Little No Heart, Spotted Eagle, Narcisse Narcelle, Spotted Elk, Crow Eagle, Little Bear, and William Larabee.

From Crow Creek, White Ghost, Drifting Goose, Bowed Head, Wizi, Dog Back, William Carpenter, and Mark Wells.

From the Lower Brule, Big Mane, Fire Thunder, Bull Head, Medicine Bull, Standing Cloud, and Alec Rencontre.

From Santee, Joe Campbell and Philip Webster.

From Rosebud, Two Strikes, Ring Thunder, Swift Bear, Ugly Wild Horse, Black Bull, Eagle Horse, Good Voice, Red Fish, Quick Bear, Pretty Eagle, He Dog, Sky Bull, Yellow Hair, Stranger Horse, High Pipe and Thomas Flood.

From Pine Ridge, Little Wound, Pretty Lance, American Horse, Little Hawk, Many Bears, No Flesh, George Sword, Standing Soldier, Little Chief, Fast Thunder, Standing Elk, and Phillip Wells.

A more able crowd of Indian orators and politicians had not been gathered before in Washington. There were seventy-two men in the delegation, and, in order to give any color to an agreement, it would be necessary to have the signatures of three fourths of these, to hope for its acceptance by the required three-fourths majority of the Indians of the reservation. I was content when Captain Pratt domiciled the Rosebud delegation with that from Standing Rock at the Belvidere Hotel, for I knew my people could not be moved, and the presence of the chiefs from Standing Rock would serve to keep the others in line — though Rosebud was solid enough against the ratification of the act.

A meeting was called for the next morning, but the Indians were not ready for the council. A speech by Swift Bird of the Cheyenne River delegation secured a postponement — though the secretary was anxious to get the hearing along — by saying that the Indians had been on the train so long that their brains were rocking, and they were like drunken men. It was Saturday morning, and the council was put over until Monday.

I shall not soon forget the next day, Sunday. The Indians had been invited to attend the different churches, there being no secular amusement provided for them, and Father Chappelle, — later archbishop, now deceased, — then of St. Matthew's church, extended an invitation to the Catholics among them to attend his church, and I was asked to accompany them. The majority of the delegation fell into line, and were taken to St. Matthew's church in two special cars; and I remember that they attracted so much attention in the body of the church that Father Mackin, assistant pastor, came and asked me if it would not be well for them to be seated in the gallery, from which they might see without being seen, which was most pleasing to the Indians, as it enabled them to see the entire congregation. After service, a lunch was provided in the rectory, which the Indians enjoyed very much, to the utter chagrin of their fellow delegates, whom they joked upon their return to the hotel for not having chosen the right church to attend — the others not having fallen into an impromptu banquet.

Monday morning the conference took place in the office of the Assistant Attorney-General for the Interior Department. Secretary Vilas, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Oberly, members of the Senate and House Committees on Indian Affairs, the three members of the Sioux commission, five of the Sioux Indian agents, and the Indian delegations were present. The first council was largely preliminary, and at the council held the following day the Indians refused assent to the proposition. The Secretary then asked them what their objections were to the act; whereupon John Grass made a speech, followed by American Horse and other Indian delegates, with Louis Primeau interpreting, giving reasons why they could not assent to the act as presented. The Secretary then directed them to put their objections and wishes into writing, and submit them to him the following day, which they said they would endeavor to comply with, and council was then adjourned for the day.

The Indians returned to their hotel for a conference, and in half an hour sent a messenger to the chairman of the commission, with the request that I be sent to aid them in drawing up their proposition. This was formulated soon enough and put on paper. It consented to the partition of the Great Sioux reservation, but asked $1.25 an acre for all the lands that would be ceded, and a certain interest-bearing fund to be placed to their credit in the United States Treasury. This proposal was signed by forty-seven members of the delegation, while fourteen of the others signed a minority report practically agreeing to the terms offered by the commission.

When the proposal was handed to the Sioux commission, they submitted it to Secretary Vilas, who would not accept it, and the commission gave the Indians up in disgust. Indeed, I had to make a personal effort in order to get the chairman to secure for the Indians an audience with President Cleveland, an honor that had been promised them, and which must be granted or they would be deeply grieved. I succeeded in having the promised audience with the President brought about, and the several delegations left for their respective reservations the same evening. I brought the Indians back home, and the matter was dropped until the following spring, when I knew that a further effort would be made.

The act of March 2, 1889, provided for another agreement much more liberal than that of the previous year, as it contained several of the provisions asked for in the majority proposition of the Indians of October 19, 1888; and a commission consisting of ex-Governor Charles Foster of Ohio, Major General George Crook, U. S. A., and Major William Warner of Kansas City, Missouri, now United States Senator from Missouri, was appointed to negotiate with the Indians for its acceptance. I concluded that the terms proposed by the new act were all that could reasonably be obtained, but I knew that the Indians as a body were opposed to ceding any portion of the reservation, and that it was clearly my business to get them into another state of mind. I had some hope of being able to do so, and, as a preliminary, I sent the men to the leaders whom the Indians knew I trusted, to tell them not to bind themselves by oath — as they had done the previous year — to reject the proposals of the commissioners.

John Grass and Gall, upon whom I depended very largely, were important and influential men. But Grass had led in the talks made in the councils of the previous year. He had elaborated arguments which were monuments of logic, and he was rather proud of his unassailable position. Gall had stood solidly up to the position he had taken. And now they were asked to change front — though the act to be submitted was in accord, except in minor details, with the proposition they had signed in Washington the previous October.

The commission met first at Rosebud and obtained a good many signatures to the agreement. Then they proceeded to the other agencies, and at Pine Ridge, Santee, Lower Brule, Crow Creek, and Cheyenne River progressed so far that the acceptance or rejection of the agreement lay with the Standing Rock people. It was estimated that if six hundred signatures could be had at Standing Rock, the act would be concurred in by the required number of Indians interested.

The commissioners arrived at Standing Rock, traveling by steamboat up the Missouri, July 25, and were entertained by the officers at Fort Yates. The Indians, who had arrived at the agency in great numbers, were greatly interested and rather excited. I met the commissioners upon their arrival, and was told by General Crook that they required six hundred signatures; that they believed I had sufficient influence with the Indians to get them, and they looked to me to help them make the agreement. The commissioners asked to have the Indians assembled in council the next day that the matter might be explained; and this I did. The council was a brief one, the Indians saying that they wanted time to hold their own councils before they could talk; and it was adjourned until Monday.

All day Sunday I was much concerned about the matter, for I could see that, unless the Indians were strongly urged, they would reject the agreement. Sunday evening I went over to the military post at Fort Yates and had a talk with Major Hugh G. Brown, of the Twelfth Infantry. For years we had been fast friends, and I felt the necessity for talking the matter over with some trustworthy person. I knew the future of the Sioux might depend on their action on the agreement; that if they rejected it, Congress might proceed to act without their consent. I laid the matter before Major Brown; told him I had been passive where I had not been opposed to the rejected proposition of the previous year, but had almost concluded that it was my duty actively to support this new measure, and procure its acceptance. He said he had been convinced of my attitude as to the proposition of 1888, and had heartily approved of it, but he now thought that the time was come to accept this measure. Before going home, a casual meeting took place that decided the matter.

I was going past the quarters of Colonel Townsend, the post commandant, where General Crook was quartered, when I was hailed from the porch and General Crook greeted me. I went up on the porch and told the general I would like to talk to him and the other members of the commission. They were gotten together, and we talked at Captain (now Brigadier General) Craigie's quarters, where Governor Foster was stopping. I told them what the situation was, of my attitude the previous year, and of the temper of the Indians; that I was now willing to have the matter go through, but it must not be pressed too hurriedly, as it would require some time for me to prepare the Indians for the change; and it was arranged that a council should be held each day, and the Indians permitted to do all the talking they wanted to.

I assured the commission that, should a few concessions be granted, the necessary signatures would be secured in three days after the rolls were presented. General Crook and the other commissioners agreed that they would use their personal efforts to get the concurrence of Congress to the concessions required, which would provide for an additional appropriation of two hundred thousand dollars to reimburse the Sioux of Standing Rock and Cheyenne River agencies for the ponies taken from them by the military in 1876; would guarantee the maintenance of the schools provided for in the act presented for ratification, to be chargeable to the cession of 1868 for the full term of twenty years, — this provision of the treaty of 1868 having been permitted to slumber until about ten years had expired, — and certain fixed interpretations were to be made of vague sections of the act.

For three days councils were held, and every day Grass, Gall, Mad Bear, and Big Head talked against the proposition. They knew I had changed my attitude, but they did not change their front — except that there was none of the keen pursuit of the commissioners that had been indulged in by Grass during the councils of the previous year. On Wednesday, I concluded that the time had come to act, but to act with caution. Grass and the other chiefs must be gotten into line.

That evening Mrs. McLaughlin entertained the commission at our quarters, at which reception all of the officers and ladies of the garrison were present. While everybody was engaged, I slipped away, accompanied by Louis Primeau, interpreter, whom I depended on absolutely in my dealings with the Hunkpapa and Blackfeet, and drove to Nick Cadotte's place, five miles from the agency. Cadotte was the brother-in-law of John Grass, and I had arranged with him to have Grass meet me at his house. The movements of Grass being closely watched by the Indians, he was afraid to meet me in Cadotte's house, and suggested a vacant building near by. I complied with this request, and we had a talk. I told him that the time had come to recede from the position taken the previous year; that the agreement must be accepted or Congress might pass the law regardless of the attitude of the Indians in the premises. Grass was an honest man and always stood for the best interests of his people, but in order to meet my views now, he would have to recede from the position he had maintained in council and in private for a long time. I told him that if the act was not concurred in, a worse thing might happen: that legislation might be enacted which would open the reservation without requiring the consent of the Indians; and I labored with him until he agreed that he would speak for its ratification and work for it. When he said that, I knew that the matter was settled and the concurrence of the Indians assured; but he would not consent to explain the matter to Gall — in that he was emphatic. I suspect that he felt he was responsible for the original attitude of that chief, and had not the courage to broach the change to him. I went to Gall myself, also to Mad Bear and Big Head, and told them what I had done and what was left to be done, and got them to agree to support the proposition.

I had arranged with Grass that the Indians were to talk the next day in the line of asking concessions, then to formulate the concessions, in which I instructed him; and finally we fixed up the speech he was to make receding from his former position gracefully, thus to bring him the active support of the other chiefs and settle the matter.

The council the next day was the biggest held at Standing Rock in many years. It was held within an enclosure made by placing branches of trees, which would temper the sun's rays for the people and orators, around three sides of a large parallelogram. The fourth side was bounded by the wall of the warehouse, and the platform upon which the commissioners and officials sat was directly in front of the doors leading into the building. I had an idea that there might possibly be some disturbance, and I proposed that, as the people signed the rolls, they should pass out through the warehouse. But there was no occasion for concern that day. Grass did most of the talking, and he changed his base with the facility of a statesman. He led the way up to asking for concessions and then asked for them. They were granted. Gall talked a little after Grass had concluded, and Mad Bear and Big Head followed after the leaders, and it was apparent, when the council adjourned for the day, that the people generally were going to accept their leadership.

I had Sitting Bull and the so-called hostiles still to deal with, and I knew that, if given an opportunity, Bull would make some sort of demonstration.

The following day every Indian who could get to the agency was present. I had instructed Two Bears, the chief of the Lower Yanktonais, to place his band so as to maintain a compact four-column formation around the semicircle, and directed the captain of the Indian police to station his men so as to protect the orators and quell any disposition on the part of the hostile faction. When the talking had been finished and the rolls were ready for signature, there was a good deal of excitement, and Sitting Bull, at the head of about twenty of his followers, put in an appearance, mounted, on the outside of the semicircle, and endeavored to stampede the Indians and break up the council, but failed in his attempt.

Grass, Mad Bear, and Big Head signed. It had been arranged that Gall should sign third, that is, following Mad Bear; it was a coveted distinction and belonged to him of right; but there was such a disturbance all about him, that he feared bodily injury from some of the Sitting Bull Hunkpapa, and while he hesitated Chief Bear Face of the Hunkpapa stepped up and signed in his place. When the first four signatures were attached, and the signers prepared to pass out through the warehouse, Mrs. McLaughlin, who was standing near the open door of the building, reported that Sitting Bull and some of his followers were making a demonstration out in front and trouble was imminent. Lieutenant Bull Head was prepared for such an emergency, and rushing with his detachment of police to the front of the building, soon quelled the disturbance, by forcing Sitting Bull and his mounted squad to vacate the grounds.

During the excitement, I caught up the rolls myself, to prevent their possible injury, and ordered the people in the council to remain quiet. I told them that order must be preserved and every man should have an opportunity to use his own judgment; that the four men they looked up to as their leaders had signed the instrument of acceptance, but that what they had done was not binding on any one but themselves, and that every man should do as he pleased, without interference; and the signing of the agreement was then resumed. The talk was made at the right time, order was restored, and the people crowded forward to attach their names. Before the commissioners left, they had over six hundred signatures, which was all they then believed was required; but when they reached St. Paul, they ascertained that they had not enough names. They had left the rolls with me, and sent word back that more names were needed. We gave them eight hundred and three names at Standing Rock before the rolls were closed.

The following December, I took John Grass, Gall, Mad Bear, Bear Face, and Big Head to Washington, where we were met by delegations from the other Sioux agencies, and additional legislation for the payment for ponies taken by the military from the Indians in 1876 was enacted by Congress that session, to meet the concessions promised by the commissioners at the Standing Rock agency. And the conditions agreed upon were faithfully carried out.

This is the history of the treaty-making with the Teton Sioux. The government has faithfully kept the promise made in the last agreement, and the people have prospered. The conditions under which the last agreement was made were such as to show the Indians that their rights were to be respected, and the fact that they were well affected to the government was demonstrated the next year, during the trying times of the ghost-dancing, when, in spite of the allurements of a new religious movement, which appealed strongly to the Indian nature, the people, with comparatively few exceptions, remained loyal to the whites, and the agent had the vast majority of them at all times under control.

The Teton Sioux made it his boast for many years that he had not killed a white man; there was another period when the same Sioux was very busy killing what whites he could get in range of, and he showed himself a soldier of rare ability. But the disposition of this stalwart, simple-minded people to do what was right was easily enough developed, when the rights they had fought for and been promised began to be respected by the whites, and the Indian was treated like a man.

The history of treaty-making with the Sioux is the history of the treaty-making with all the Indians. The treaties were made for the accommodation of the whites, and broken when they interfered with the money-getters. There never was a time in the history of this country when the government could not have obtained any reasonable concession from the Indians, if it had treated the red men honestly; and I know of few — and those isolated cases — Indian outbreaks which were not preceded by acts of oppression practiced by the civilized people on the barbarians; and like barbarians those same people revenged themselves. There is no possible justification for the barbarities practiced by the Indians when they were aroused to dig up the hatchet, but the Indian wars generally have been in the nature of fierce reprisals for injuries sustained. That the Indian has not always discriminated between the innocent and the guilty in taking his revenge, is certain — else had there been no Minnesota massacre. If his sense of justice had led him to fine discrimination in these matters, the red man would long ago have made an attack on the national Capitol.

CROWS DANCING THE OMAHA OR GRASS DANCE

CHAPTER XVII

MODERN TREATY-MAKING

Fourteen Years of Indian Diplomacy — Dealing with the Shoshones and Arapahoes — Getting Title to the Great Pipestone Quarry — How a Cheyenne Indian can Die.

IN January, 1895, I declined an appointment as assistant commissioner of Indian Affairs. Hon. Hoke Smith, afterwards governor of Georgia, was the Secretary of the Interior, and he made the tender of the appointment under conditions that made the declination embarrassing, because it was so flattering. Fourteen agents had been called to Washington for conference. We had a meeting with the Secretary, and it fell to my lot to answer many of the questions propounded by him. I had a great and vital interest in the Indian work and knew the people. I had, moreover, very fixed ideas as to how they should be treated. After the conference the Secretary made an appointment for me to meet him privately. I met him next morning, and he told me that President Cleveland had selected me for the position of assistant commissioner. I declined, for the reason that I preferred service in the field, which would keep me in direct touch with the Indian. I told the Secretary that I had certain ideas as to how the Indian should be treated, and did not wish to be in a position where I would be tempted to apply these ideas and possibly be overruled by the commissioner. Besides, the place was subject to change with a change of administration, and I was not minded to be so situated that I might be forced out of the service by the exigencies of politics.

Secretary Smith said that he would have the position placed under civil-service rules, making it continuous, but I persisted in my declination and then the Secretary said: —

"The President is desirous of giving you some sort of recognition and a broader field for your work. Will you accept an inspectorship?"

I told him at once that I would, — that the work would be congenial and I thought I could be useful in the field. An appointment was made for me to remain and see the President after the other agents had left. An audience was given all of us by President Cleveland the next day, and the matter was settled.

Secretary Smith paid me the compliment of asking who I thought would make a desirable agent to succeed me at Standing Rock, and I recommended John W. Cramsie of St. Paul, Minnesota. Mr. Cramsie had succeeded me at Devils Lake, and had declined a third reappointment at that agency. He knew the Sioux, and I had confidence in his ability to manage the Standing Rock people. He was appointed to the place, and I took the position of inspector and began active work on the first of the following April, though my appointment ran from the 19th of January.

Treaty-making with the Indians has been my business very generally since my appointment as inspector. I have made all the treaties, — or agreements, as they are designated now, legally, — with two exceptions, that have been entered into in the past thirteen years. There was a treaty-making commission that was organized in President Cleveland's last term, but the commission made only two treaties in the several years of its existence, — one known as the Fort Hall treaty, and the other with the Crows.

This constant treating with many tribes has brought me into close personal contact with practically all of the Indian tribes of the country. From the Chippewas of Minnesota, in the northeast, to the Mission Indians of California, in the southwest, I have dealt with all the red people, consummating numerous agreements and other important negotiations. In the list of Indians who were parties to these agreements, were many tribes who would not appear in the enumeration of the agreements themselves, for it is frequently the case in the Pacific Coast agencies that remnants of many tribes are gathered on a single reservation. And I might say now that I believe the solution of the Indian problem is brought very much nearer to us by this mixing of the tribes.

I had recently occasion to visit a remote agency in California at the Round Valley school. The reservation is located in the heart of the Coast Range mountains, forty-odd miles from the nearest railroad point and approachable only by a mountainous and difficult road. It is cut off from the world by its difficulty of access. On this reservation there were gathered during the third quarter of the last century fragments of bands belonging generally to the Digger tribe, with a couple of remnants of people that were not classified as Diggers. These bands, or sub-tribes, spoke different languages. They had been widely scattered and much persecuted. They had some traditional customs in common, and they were very far down in the scale of humanity. Being confined on the one reservation, they were compelled to adopt a common language, and they took to the English as the readiest mode for a common tongue. This necessarily broke down the Indian barrier of a language foreign to that used by the whites, and made easy their conversion to other customs of the white people.

I have no hesitancy in saying that these people, who were so far down in the scale of humanity a couple of generations ago, are now further advanced than nine tenths of the Indians in the country. They have received no government aid, have been compelled to "rustle" for subsistence, and are at least the equals of the whites who live in the country surrounding them. They demonstrate positively the tenability of my theory that the Indian problem will solve itself as soon as the Indian is shown that he must depend entirely on his own resources; that the government has nothing more in store for him. These people — Concows, Wylackies, Ukies, and several other bands — are prosperous and enlightened. Almost invariably they have attained to some sort of independence, and are rather better off than the white people among whom they live.

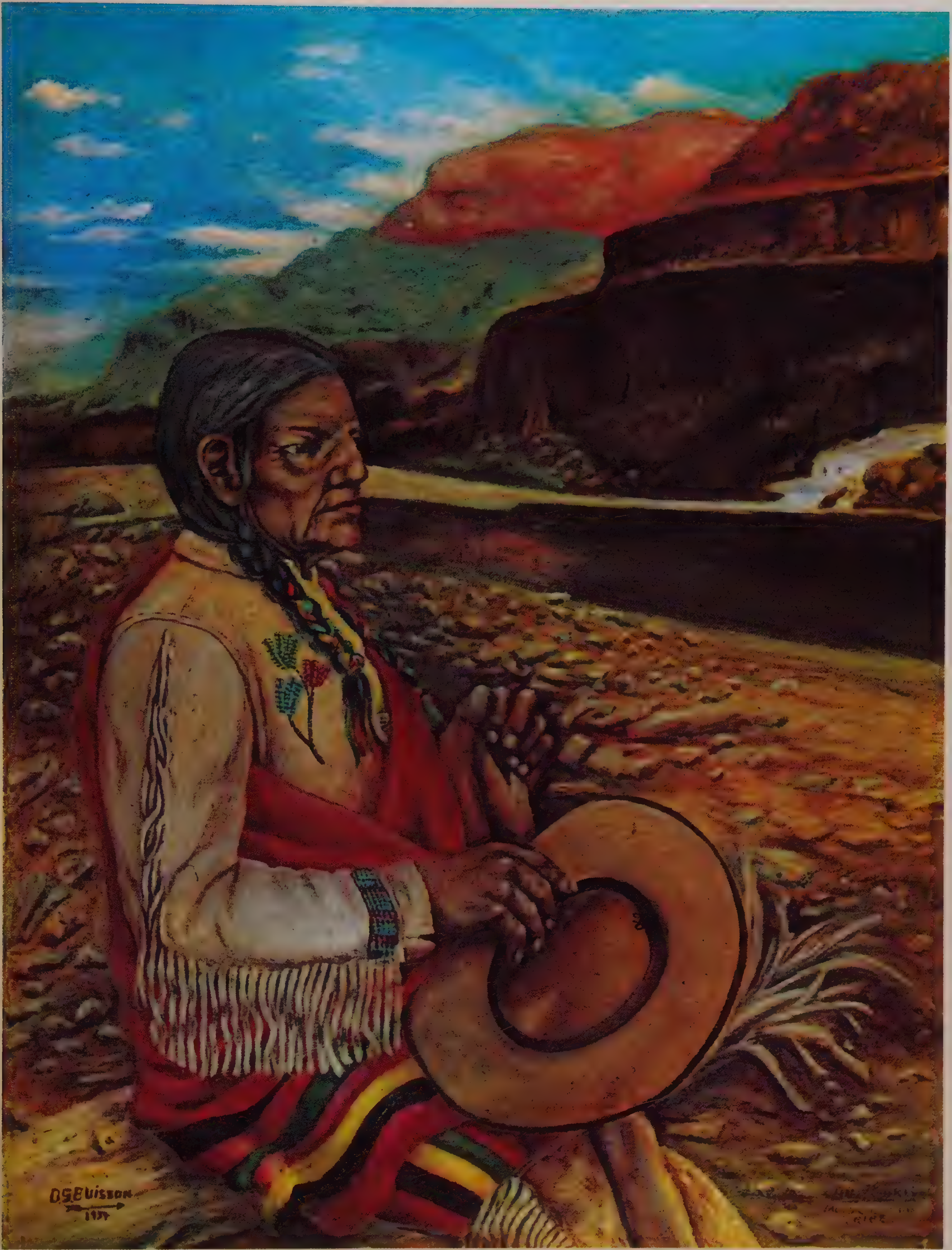
Indians are shrewder in diplomacy than might be expected by those who judge of their capacity from the manner in which they have been deprived of their native riches. In the hard school of adversity they have learned a great deal, and I have found among them many men who, had they been educated, would have made excellent lawyers. It is true that I have generally succeeded in making the agreements that

The Paintings of Daniel Shaw Buisson

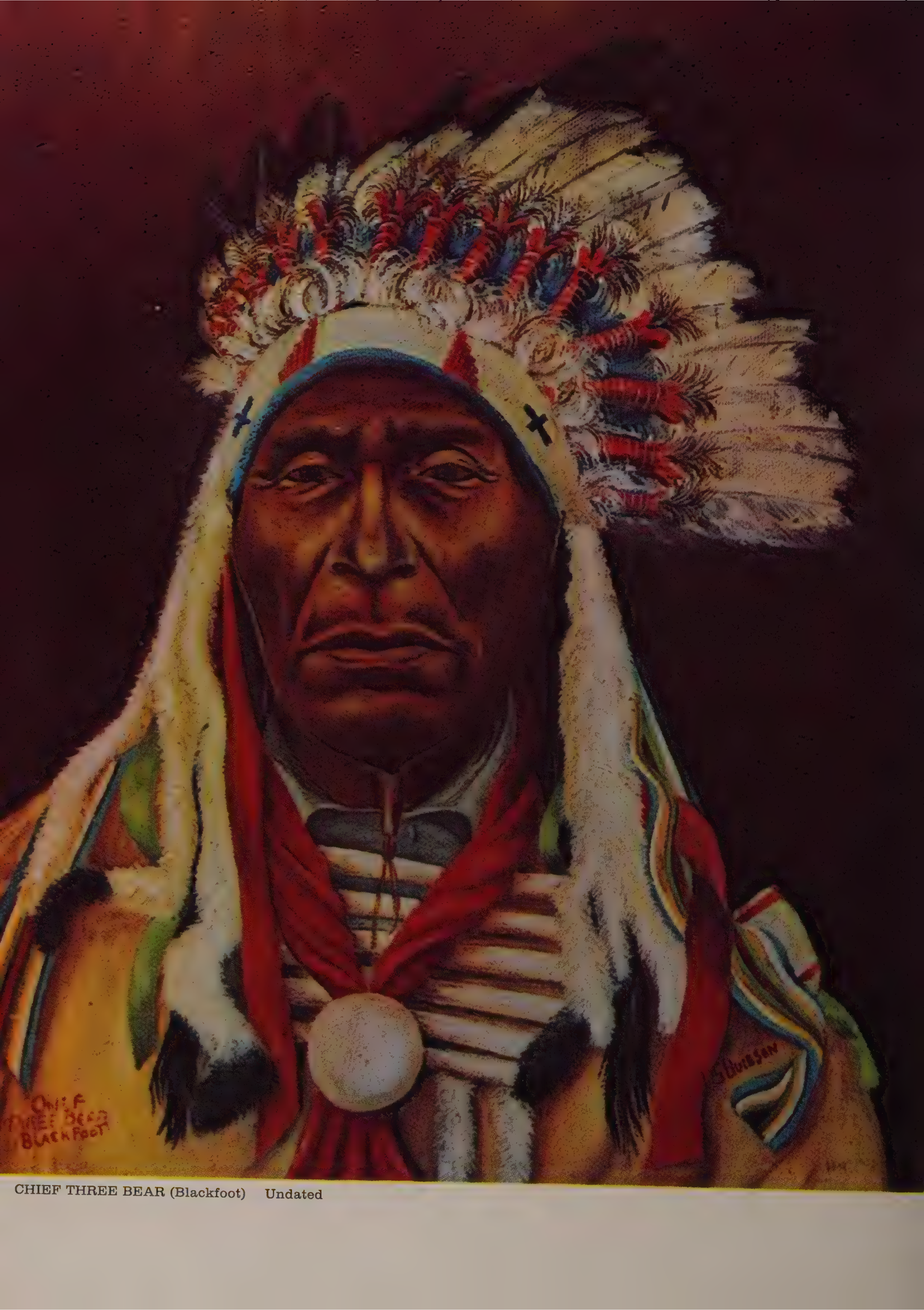
SECOND PORTFOLIO

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The paintings in this, the second portfolio, were mostly undated. Therefore they could not be arranged chronologically so are presented more or less as they came to hand.

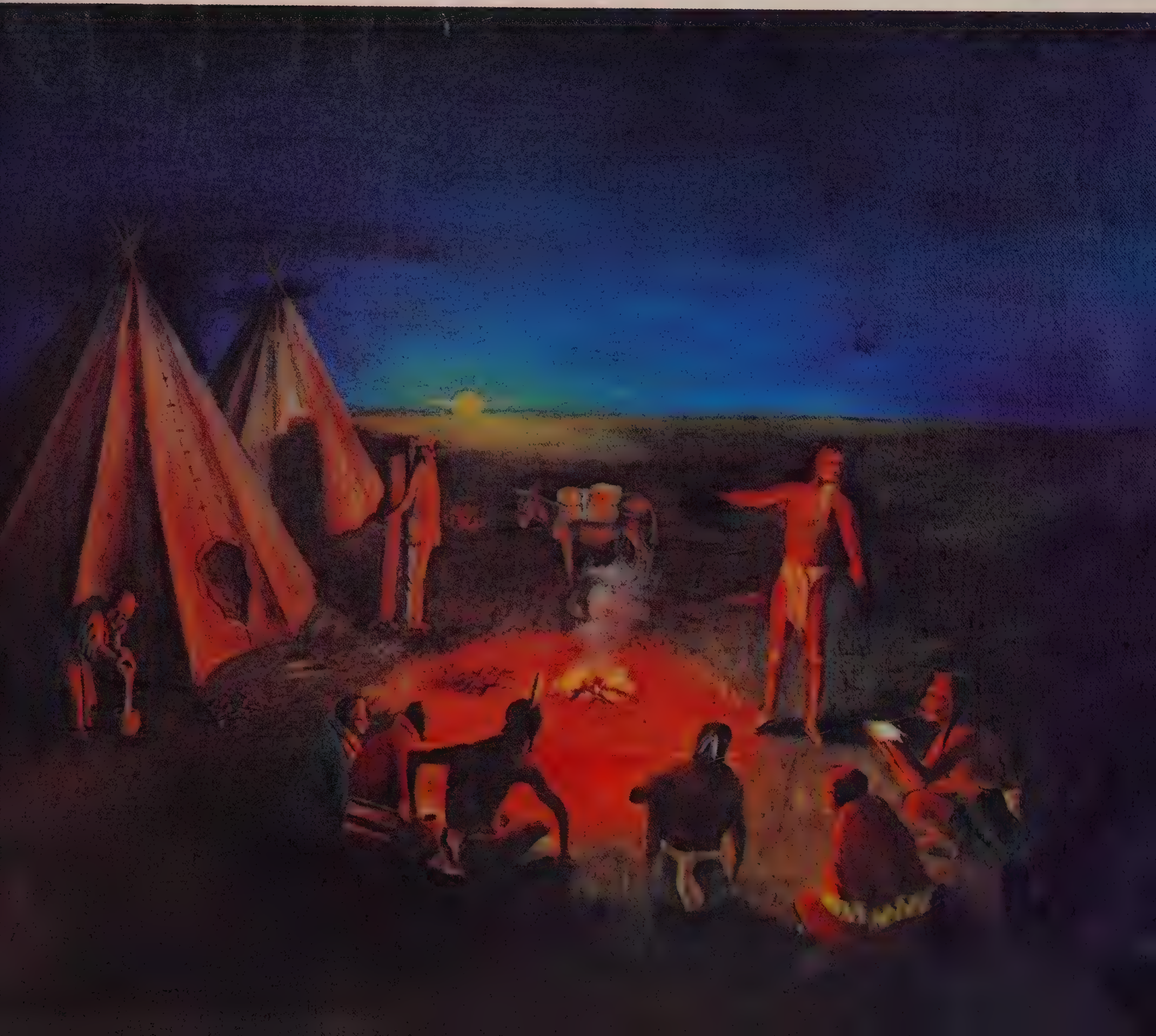

O.G.BUISSON
1954

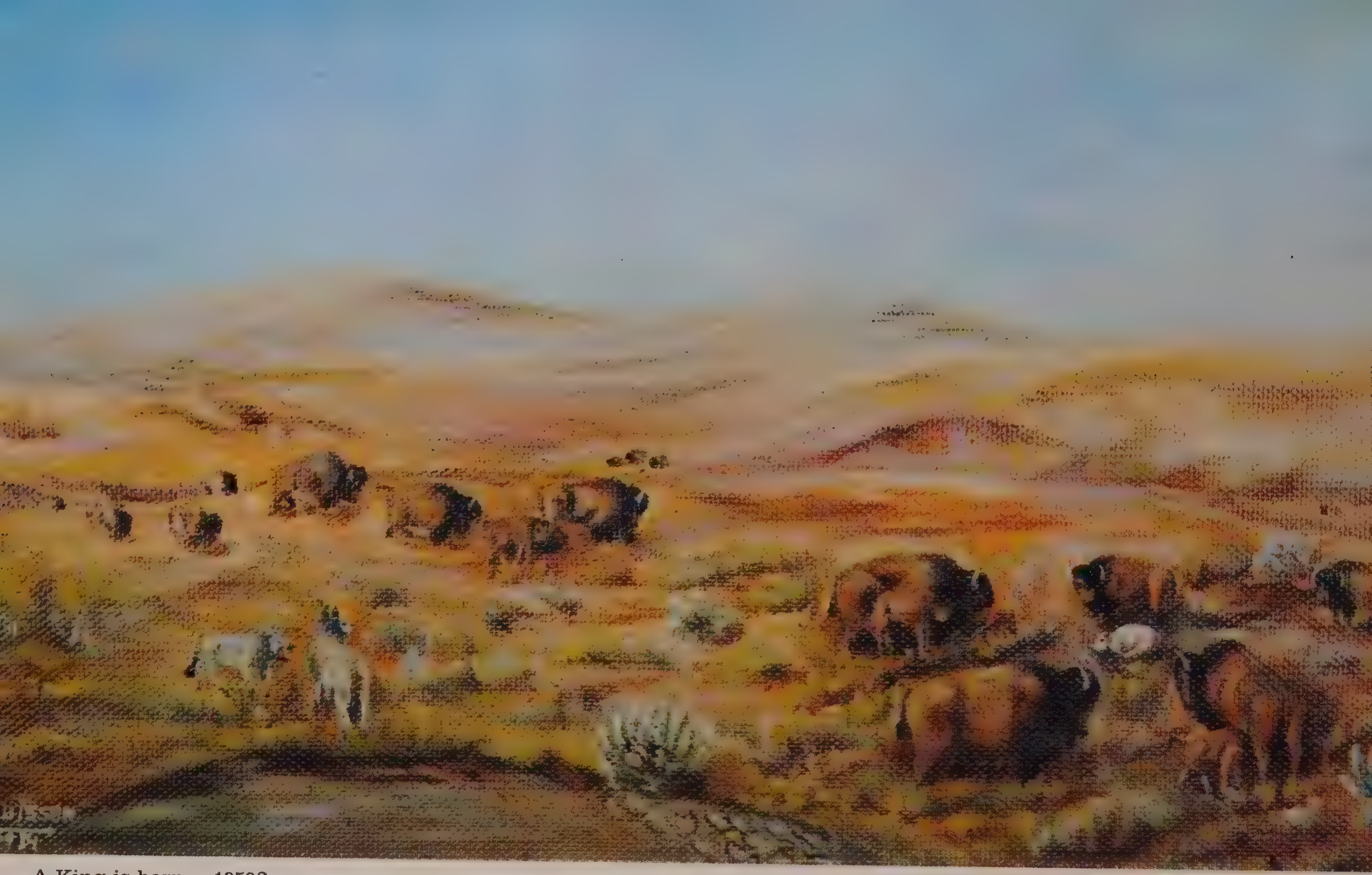
BILLY CURLEW (Moos-Columbia Tribe) 1954


CHIEF
THREE BEAR
BLACKFOOT

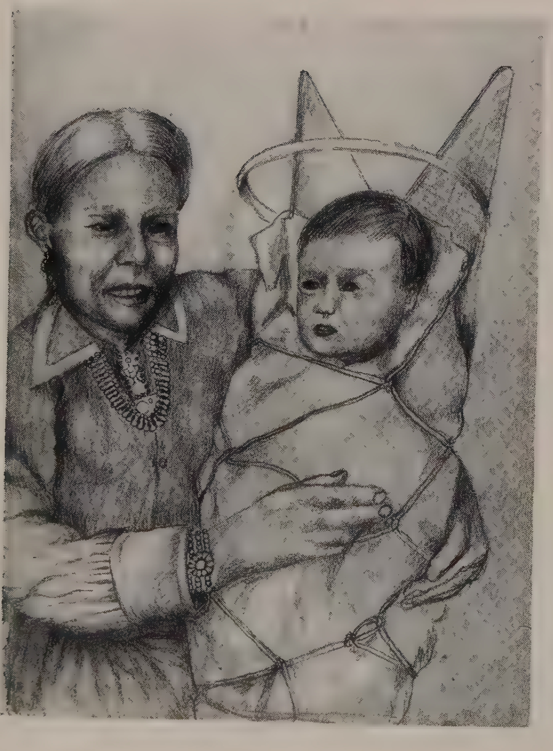
CHIEF THREE BEAR (Blackfoot) Undated

No title Undated

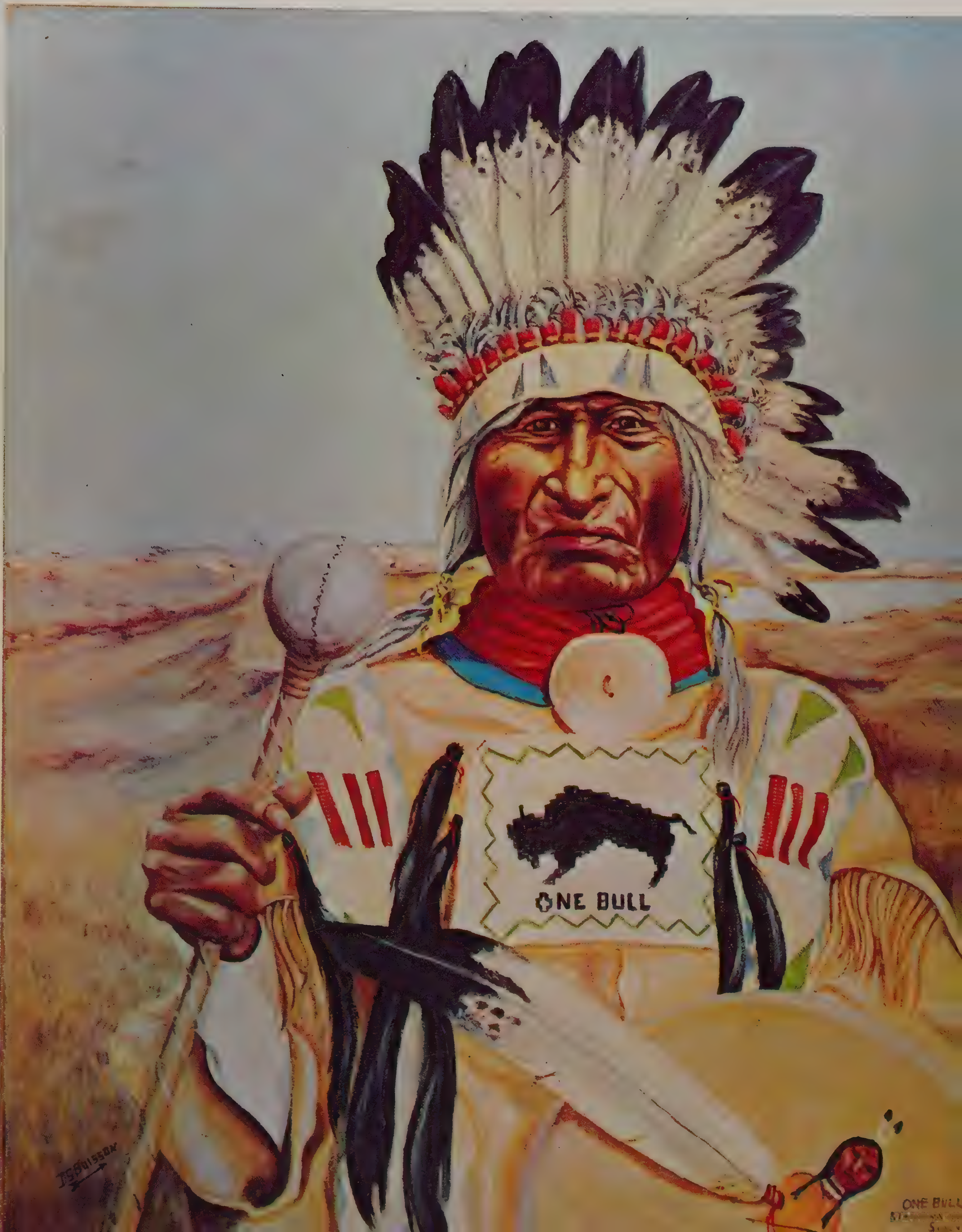


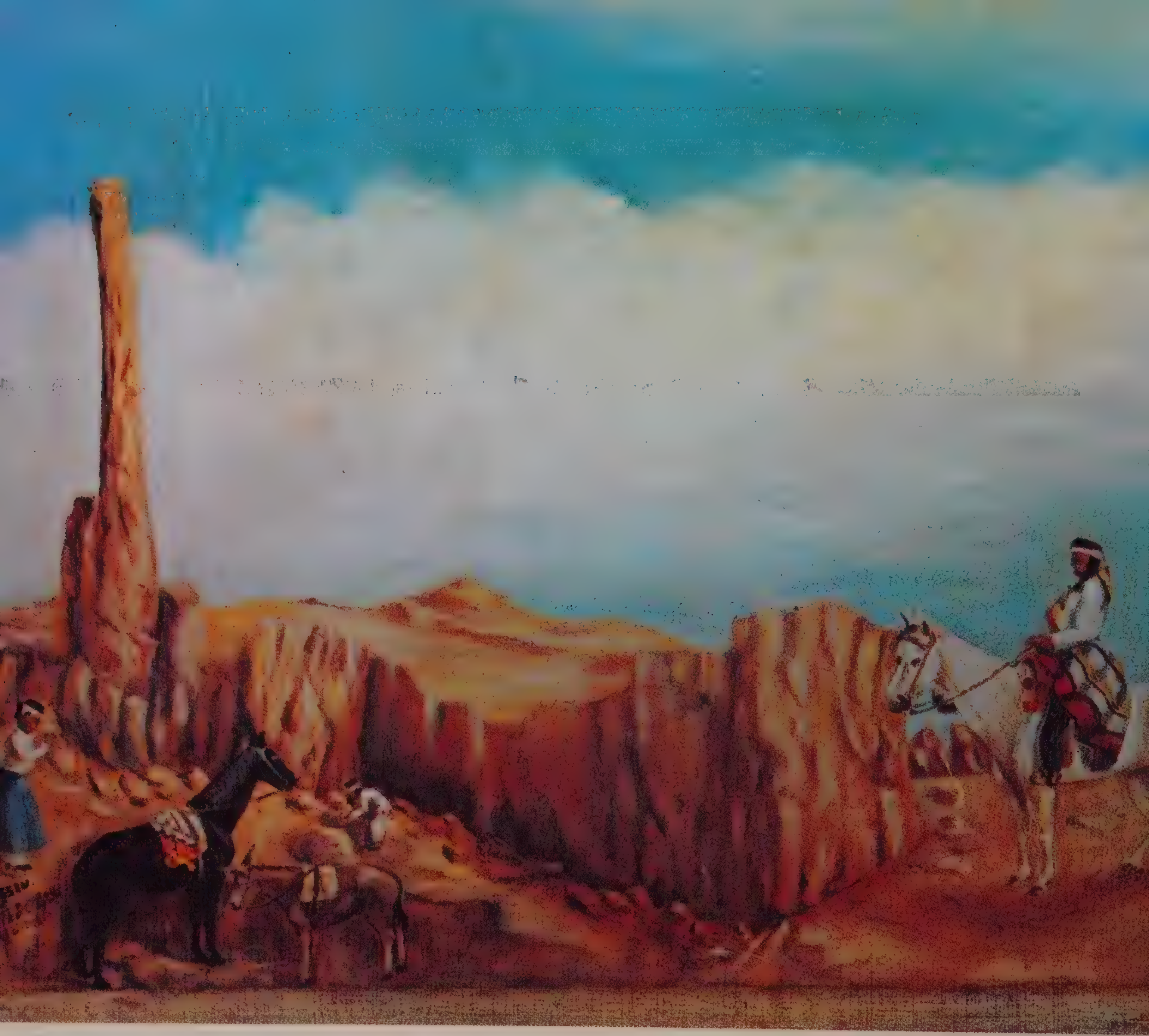


A King is born 1959?



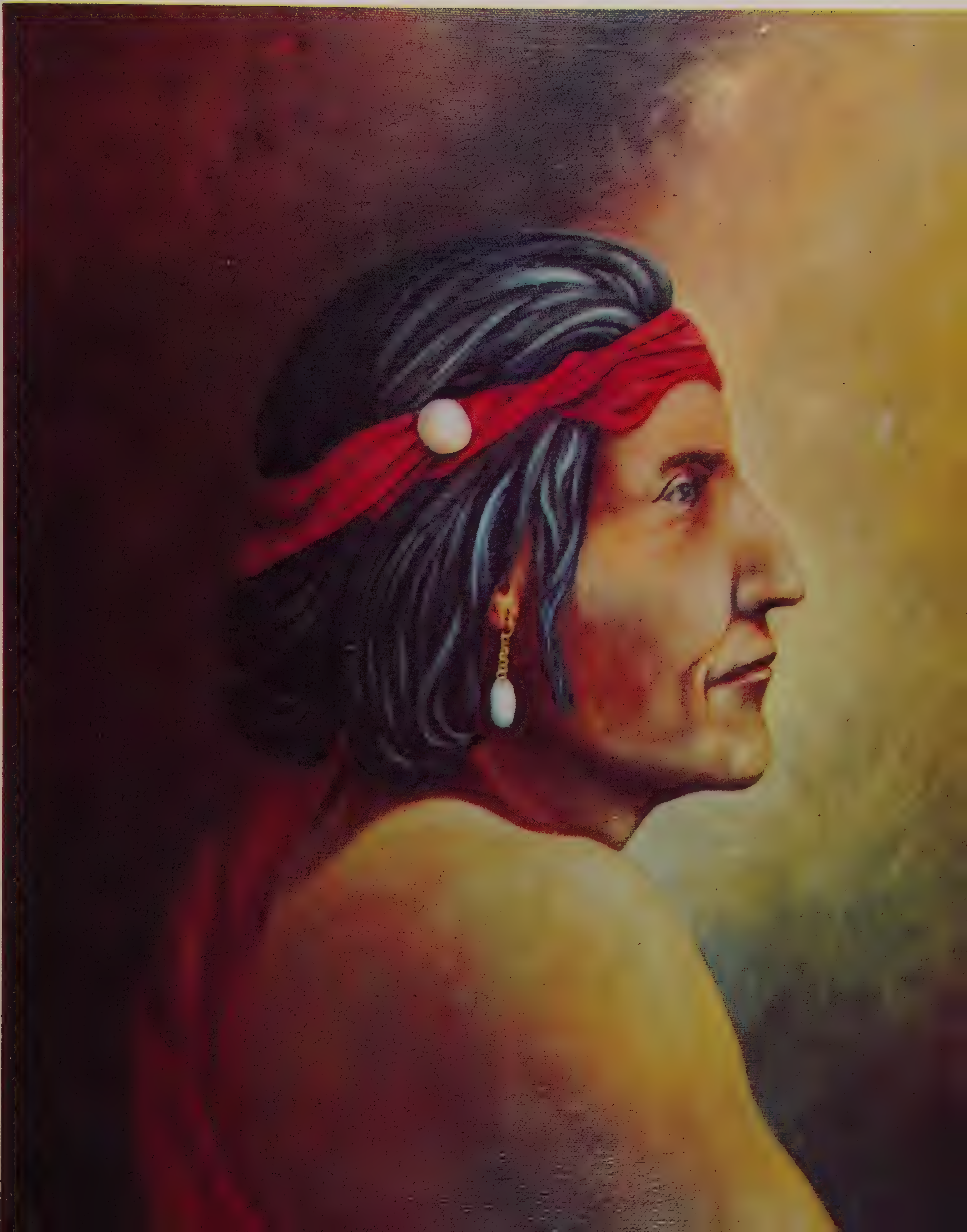
ONE BULL (Standing Rock Sioux) Undated


ONE BULL
JSBUISSON
ONE BULL



Title indiscernable   Undated

Hopi Indian Undated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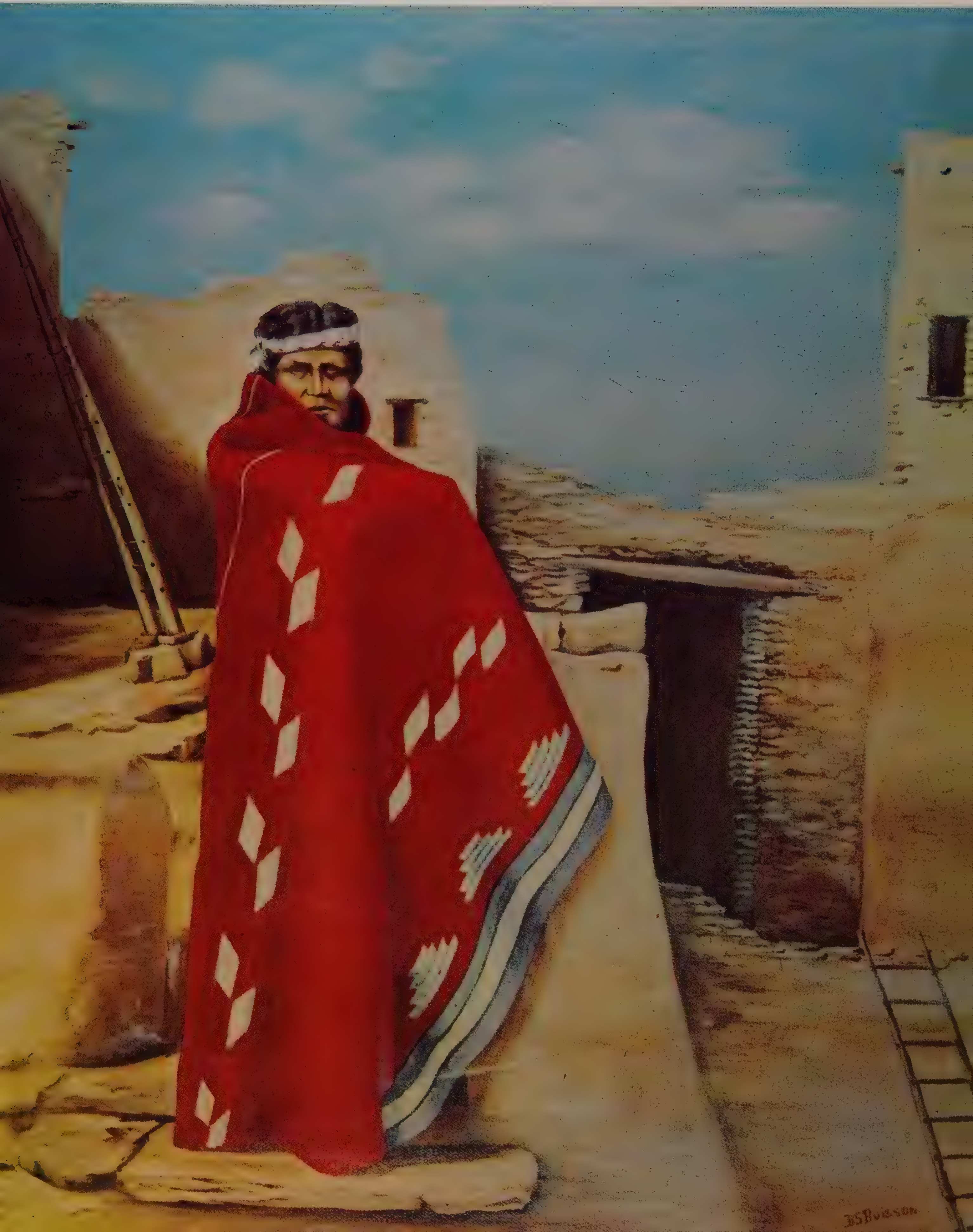
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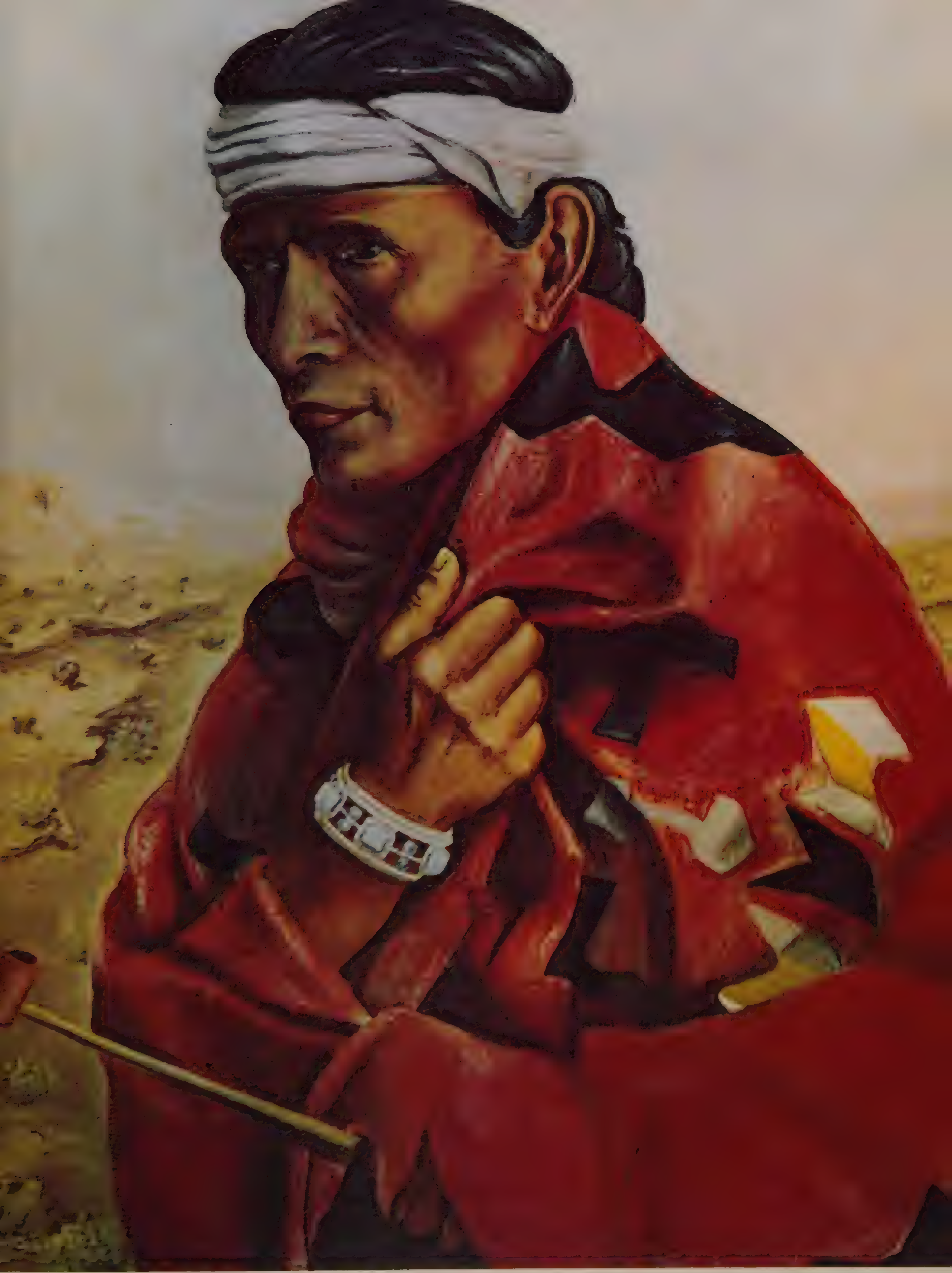
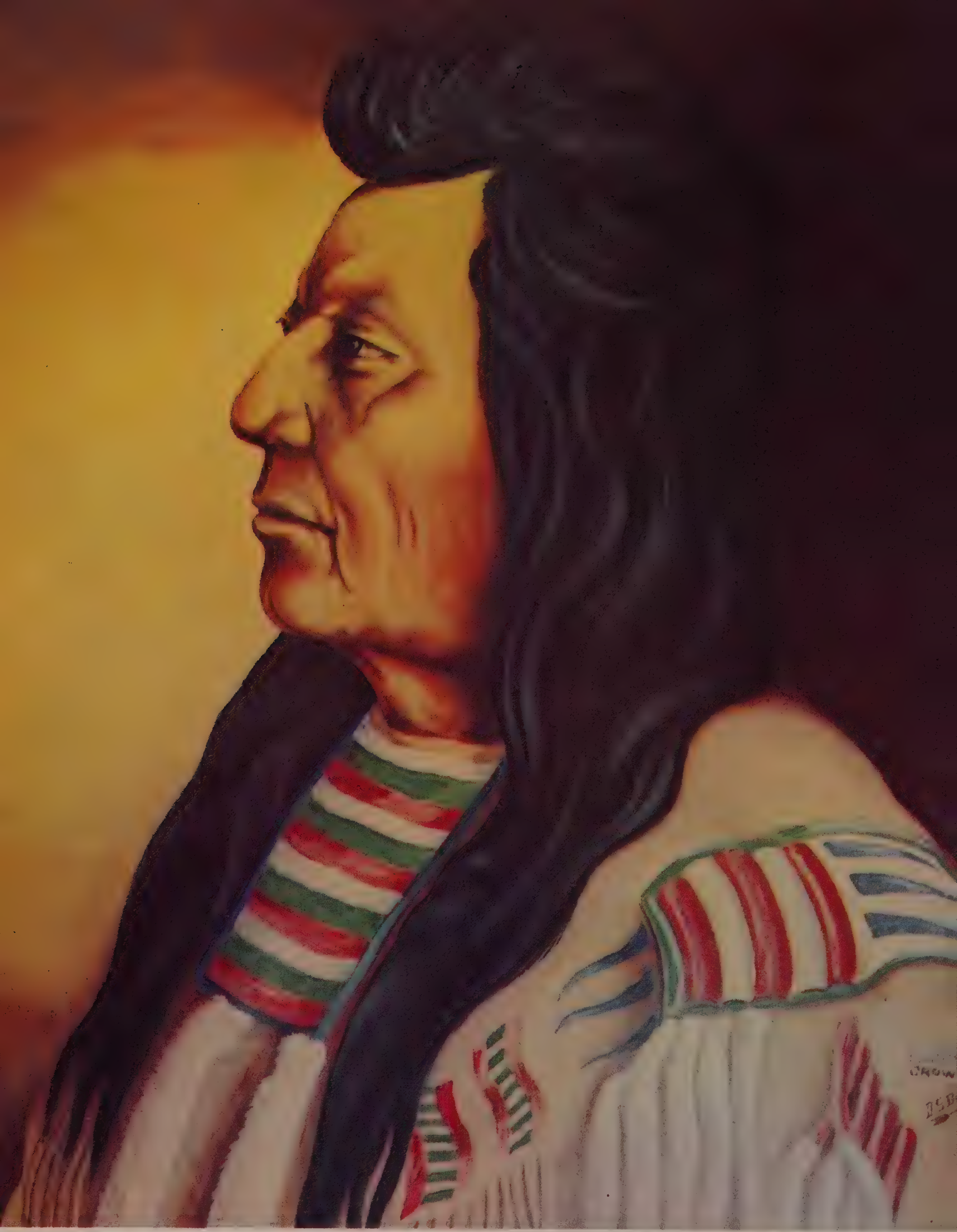
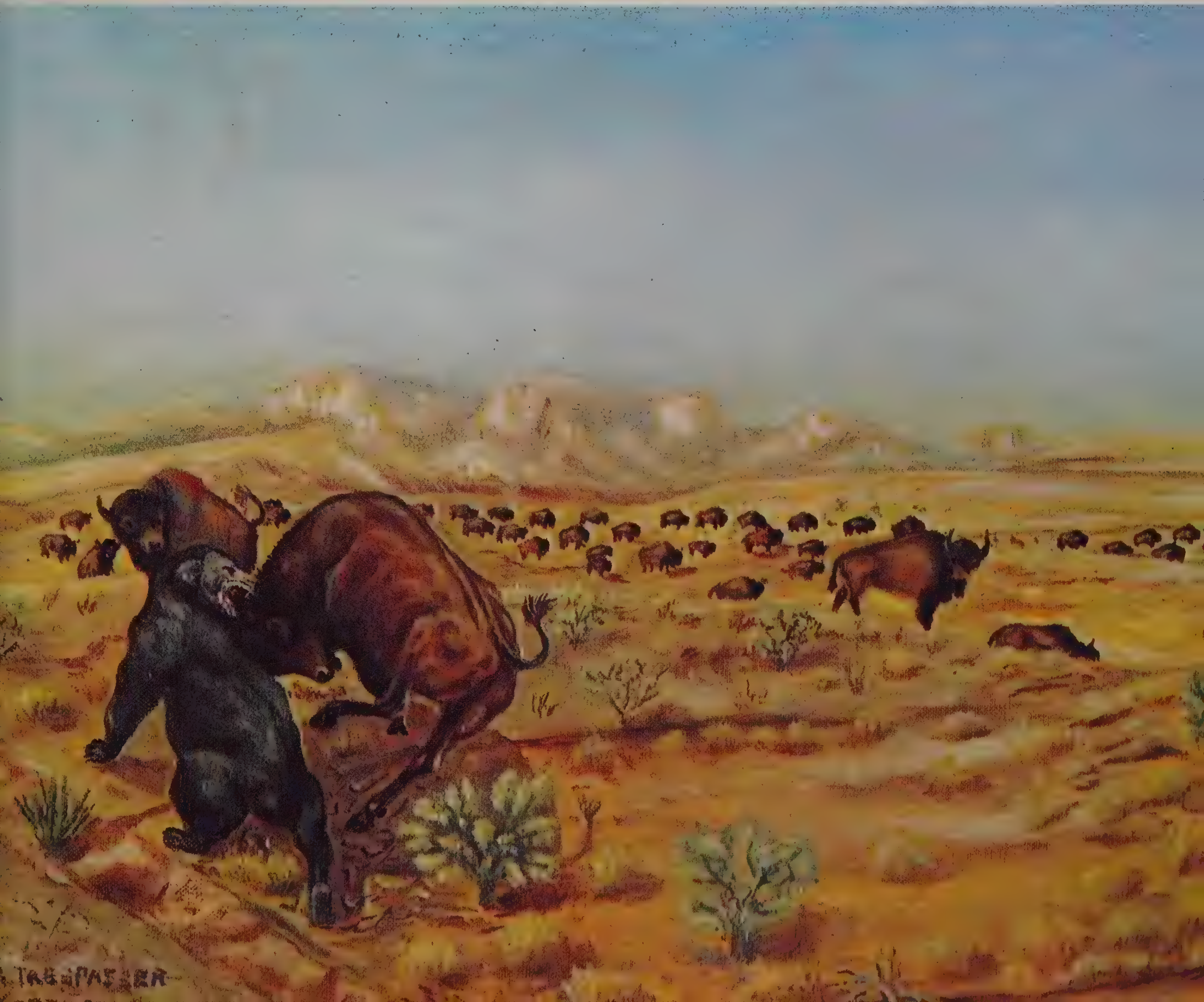


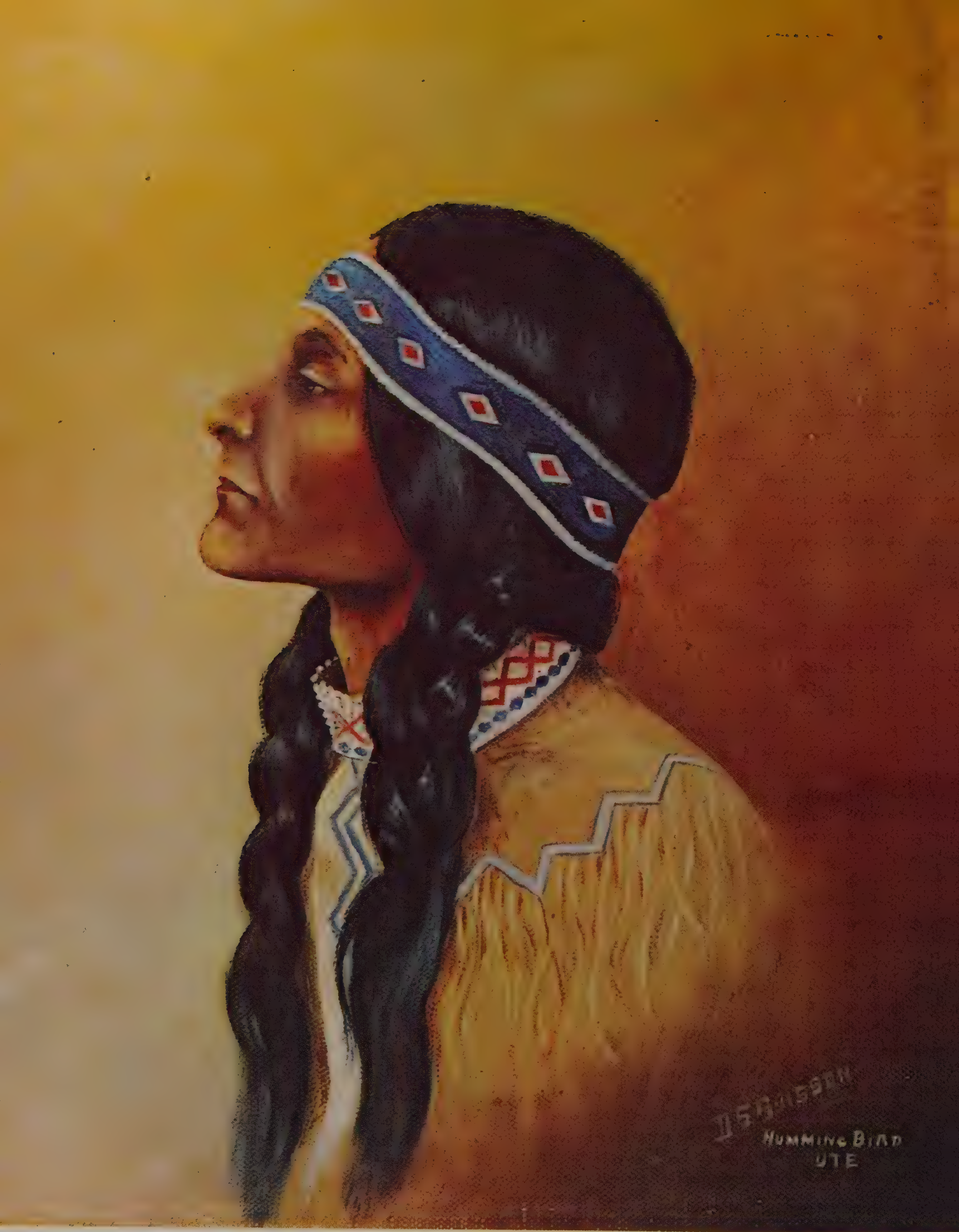
Back home (Teton Sioux) Undated



PLENTY COUPS (Crow Chief) Undated

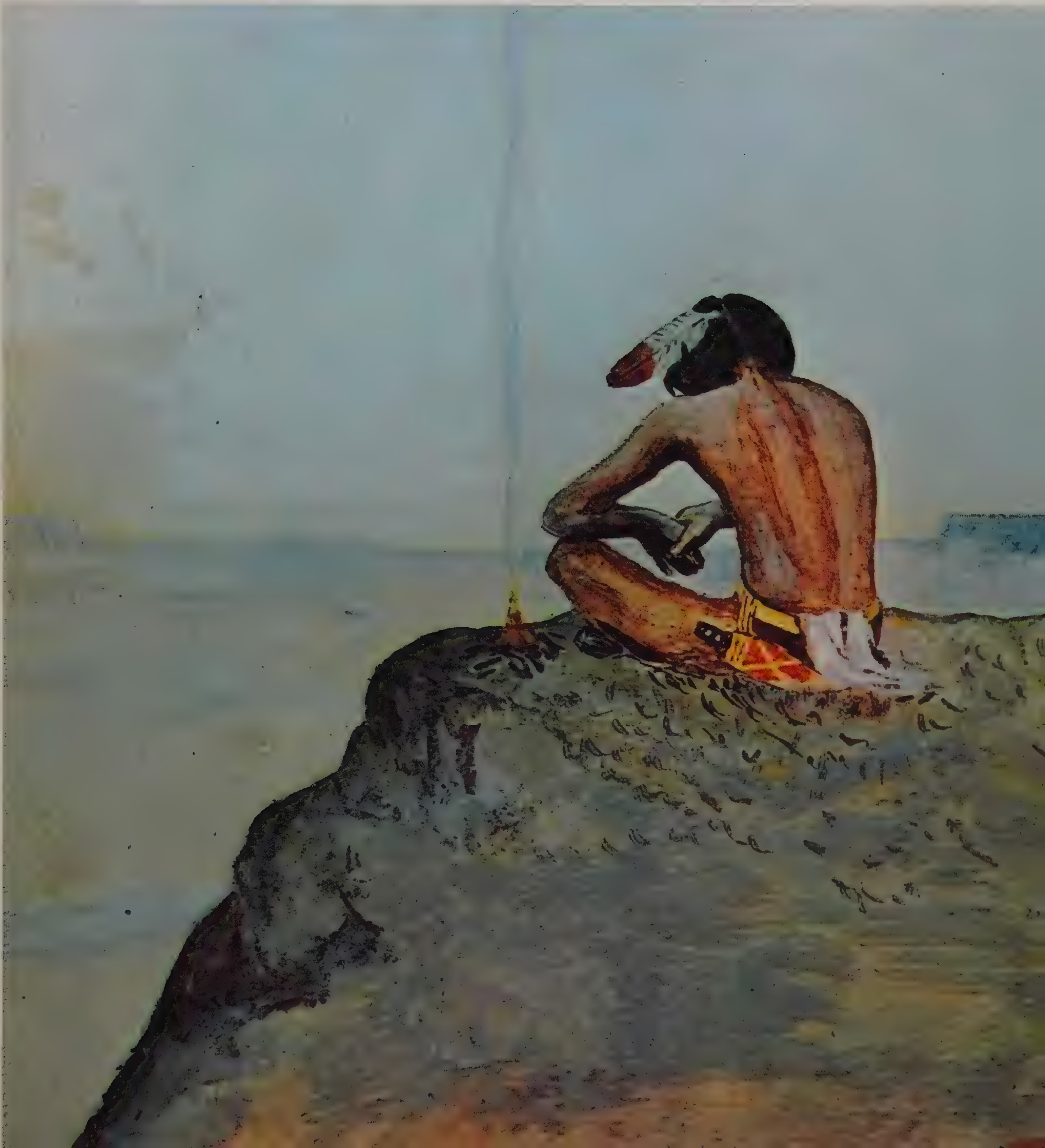
The trespasser 1944?

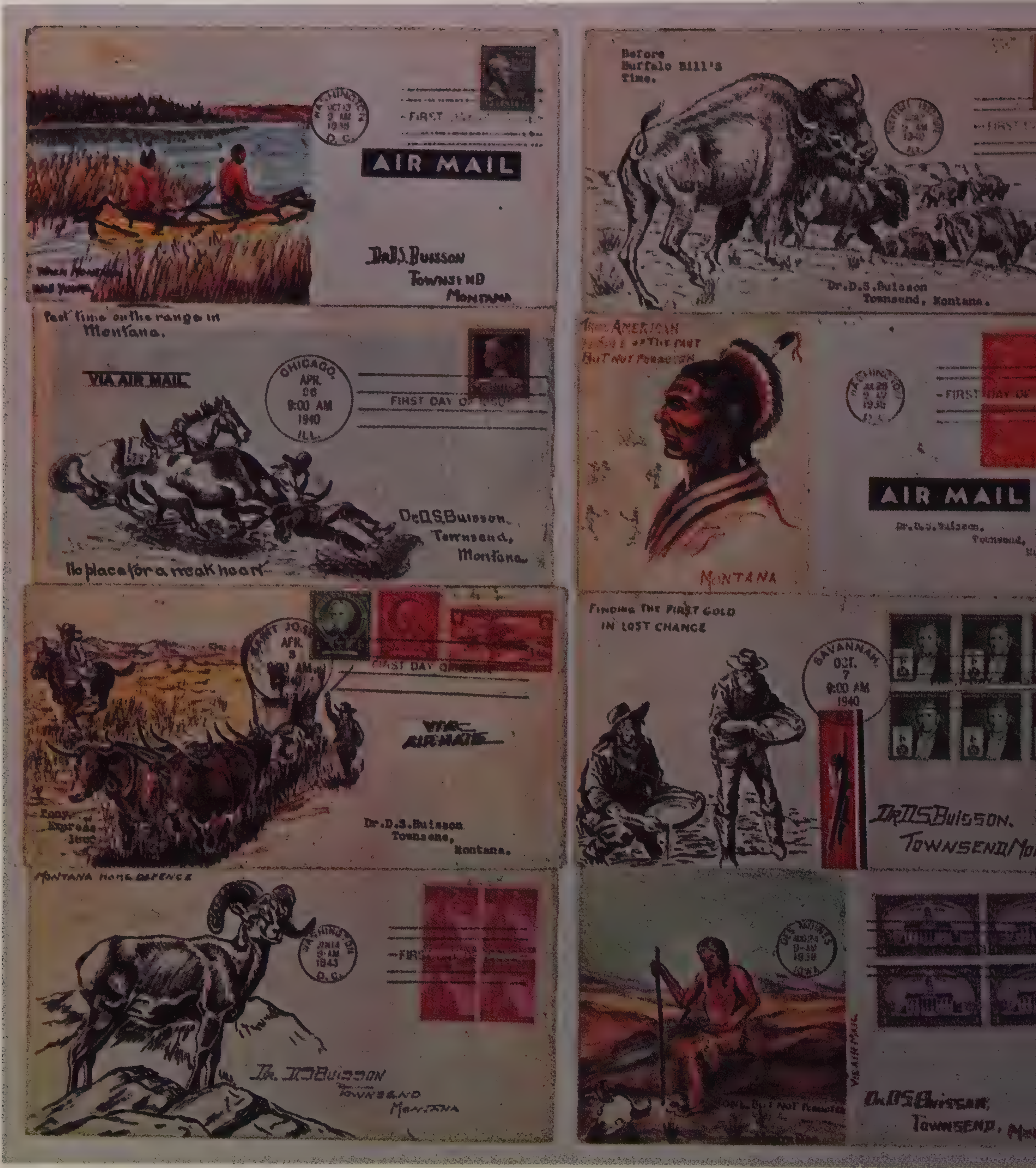

TRESPASSER


HUMMING BIRD
UTE

HUMMINGBIRD (Ute)   Undated

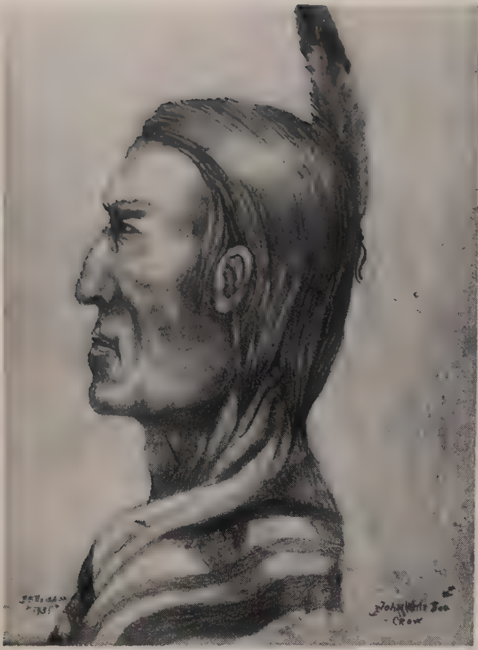
No title (Watercolor) Undated




AIR MAIL
Dr. D.S. Buisson
Townsend
Montana
Past time on the range in Montana.
VIA AIR MAIL
FIRST DAY OF ISSUE
No place for a weak heart
VIA AIR MAIL
Pony Express 1860
MONTANA HOME DEFENCE
Before Buffalo Bill's Time.
FINDING THE FIRST GOLD IN LOST CHANCE
MONTANA
VIA AIR MAIL

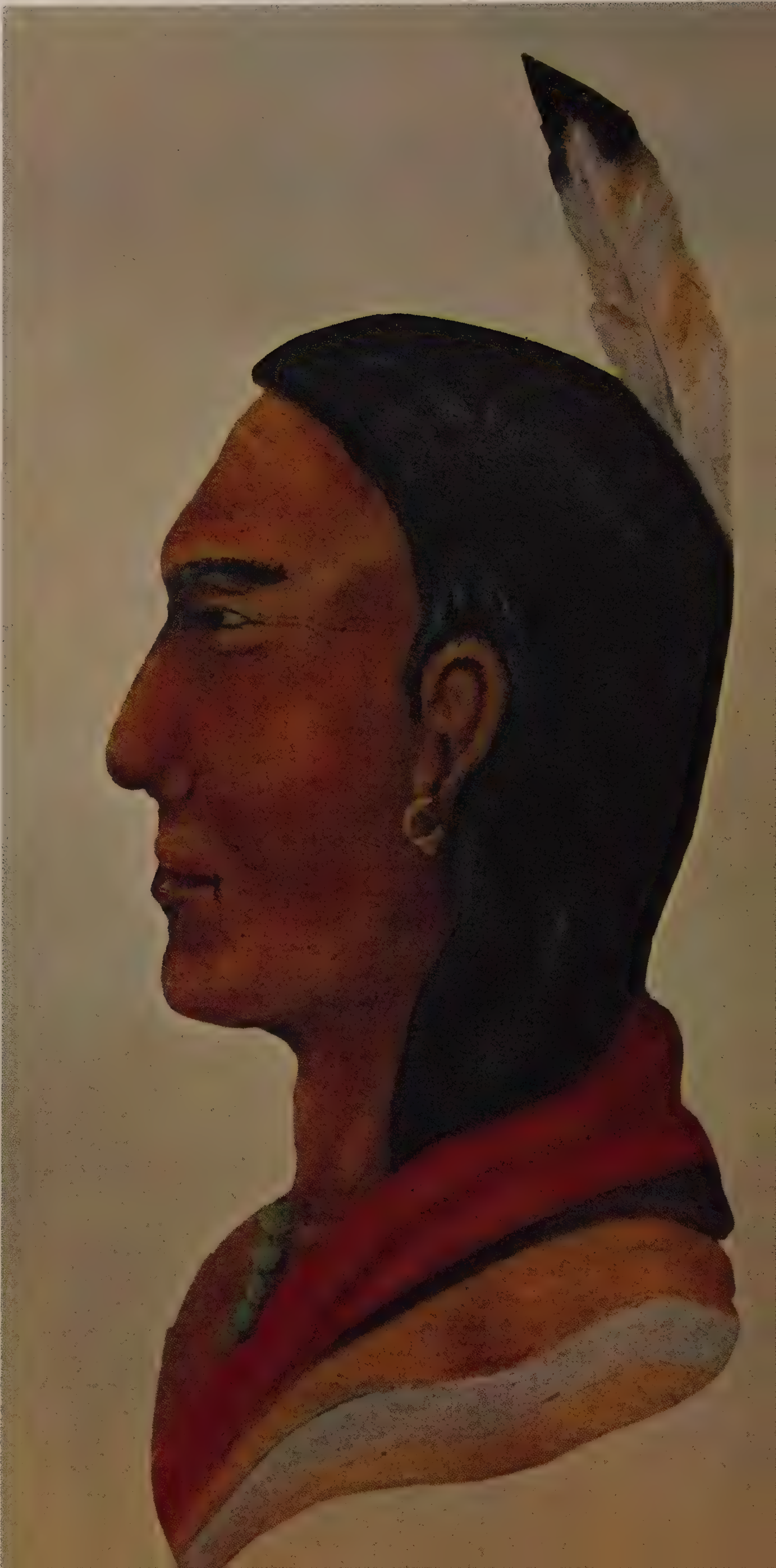
Some of Buisson cachets

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE
Dr. D.S. Buisson
Townsend
Mont.
Montana
BOSTON MASS. 1940
Dr. D.S. Buisson.
Townsend.
Mont.
WILD LIFE IN MONTANA
WASHINGTON D.C. 1938
FIRST DAY OF ISSUE
Dr. D.S. Buisson
Townsend Mont.
AIR MAIL
WASHINGTON D.C. 1940
Dr. D.S. Buisson.
Townsend.
Mont.



The preliminary pencil sketch

JOHN WHITEDOG (Crow) (Painted on leather) 1935



I have offered the Indians, but this success was rather due to the manner of the negotiation than because the agreements were desired by the Indians. This I have effected by permitting the other parties to the agreement to take the position of making the terms themselves. In almost every instance, the attitude of the Indian in the beginning has been that of opposition to the proposed agreement, but they have always come around to the other point of view. It has been simply a matter of showing them, by illustrations they would understand, that what was proposed would be best for them in the long run.

They are simple-minded people, and direct arguments must be made to them; but they are no longer amenable to the argument that used to take the form of feasting them. Many successful treaty-makers used this method most effectively. General Crook was known among the Sioux as "the pony-and-grub man." On one occasion, when I was negotiating an agreement with the Red Lake Chippewas of Minnesota, for the cession of a portion of their reservation, one of the chiefs, who was originally opposed to the proposition submitted, said that the beef that was piled on the porch was there for the purpose of seducing his young men. I know not if that be true, but he ate some of the beef, and signed the agreement.

Practically all of the so-called agreements made with the Indians in these latter days concern the cession of lands that have been parts of Indian reservations. Among the agreements which I have negotiated are those which opened to settlement large areas in South Dakota and other states, and with this feature of the land-openings the public is not familiar. The method of procedure in treaty-making is nearly always the same, the argument being adapted to local conditions. In the list of treaties in which I represented the government and was successful in having them accepted, the proposition in every case arising with the government, are three agreements with the Shoshones and Arapahoes, two tribes located on the same reservation in Wyoming; with the Lower Brules, the Sioux of the Rosebud agency, ceding the land that caused the rush to Bonesteel, South Dakota, in 1904, and again in 1909; with the Otoes and Missourias; with the Klamaths and Modocs; with the Northern Cheyennes; with the Grande Rondes; with the Yanktons for the Pipestone quarry; with the Sioux of Devils Lake, North Dakota; with the Red Lake Chippewas; with the Mille Lacs Chippewas; with the Sioux of the Cheyenne River agency, for grazing leases and cattle-trails, also for a large cession of lands, in 1908; with the Standing Rock Sioux, the Pah-Utes of Walker River, Nevada; with the Port Madison Indians, Washington, and with the Mormons of Tuba City, Arizona, — the latter being an agreement for the relinquishment of land held by them, and necessary for the extension of the Moqui reservation.

My first agreement was with the Shoshones and Arapahoes of Wyoming. They are distinct tribes, occupying the Wind River reservation, and a drive of one hundred and fifty miles from Rawlins on the Union Pacific Road landed me at the agency. Both tribes had gathered at the agency for the discussion of the treaty, and the matter was a delicate one for the reason that tribal jealousy existed and each tribe feared that the other would get an advantage. The agreement proposed required the assent and signatures of a majority of all the male adults of each tribe.

Indian human nature is pretty much the same the country over, and although I knew nothing of either the Shoshones or Arapahoes by personal contact, I knew them as Indians. As a matter of fact, my knowledge of the Sioux language has made it possible for me to get along in conversation, with the assistance of the sign language, with most of the Indians east of the Rocky Mountains and north of Texas. The Shoshones were very different from the Sioux, and had even been on fighting terms with them in my time. The Arapahoes were regarded by the Shoshones as interlopers to a certain extent. The reservation had originally been Shoshone country, and the Arapahoes had been located there as a matter of expediency.

The Arapahoes were as strong, numerically, as the Shoshones, but the latter had the advantage of a spokesman whose gift of language and acquirements made him a man to be regarded with some respect. His name was George Terry, a mixed blood, an elder of the Mormon church and a talker of some ability. He happened to favor the proposed cession, but, if he had not, it would not have made any difference with his advocacy. It has frequently occurred that the Indians in council have come to a conclusion opposed to the views of their spokesmen, and I have listened to some very forcible arguments made by Indians whose personal views were diametrically opposed to the sentiment they were compelled to express in council with me.

The proposition that I had to make to the Shoshones and Arapahoes had been, in effect, submitted to them before by special commissions. One commission went out in 1891, working upon an appropriation of five thousand dollars that had been made for the purpose of effecting the agreement. The commission failed in its object. Another commission was sent out two years later, with a similar appropriation, and returned empty-handed. I knew that the Indians could never be induced to accept the agreement if it was put to them as a business proposition. I took the Indian point of view in approaching them. Sharp Nose, the chief of the Arapahoes, was married to a Sioux woman. I could not speak Arapahoe, but he understood Sioux. I went with him out over a portion of the reservation where there had been some complaints of whites trespassing. And I talked Sioux to him.

The Cañon of the Wind River is a marvelous formation, and I saw and admired his country. It is really such a grand work of nature that I believe, when the transportation problem has been solved in that country, it will rival the Yellowstone Park and the Grand Cañon of the Colorado as an attraction for lovers of scenic grandeur. Sharp Nose may have appreciated my admiration for his country. He may have been impressed by the fact that I could talk to him directly and without the aid of an interpreter.

Washakie, the chief of the Shoshones, then a man of eighty-eight years, also became my friend. He was a strong man and a great warrior. I had heard the story of how he retained the chieftainship of his tribe after he had become a very old man. I told him the story, and it pleased him very much.

As I heard it, Washakie was part Shoshone and part Umatilla. He had retained his domination over the tribe up to the time he was seventy years of age, but some of the ambitious younger men thought it time that he should give way to another chief. The matter was brought up in council. Washakie heard it discussed, and action on the resolution was postponed. That night he disappeared, and nothing was seen of him until the time appointed, two moons later, for action on the resolution to depose him. The date of the postponed council arrived. The head men and warriors were assembled in the council lodge, and there was much speculation as to the whereabouts of the chief. No man had heard of him. The country beyond that of the Shoshones was not safe for a man of that tribe to be alone in. They were a warlike people and had a standing quarrel with outsiders. The men of the council feared that Washakie had gone to his death in a state of pique, because it was proposed to depose him. While the council was in session, the flap of the lodge was thrown open and Washakie stalked in. He threw down before the council six scalps taken from the heads of the enemies of the Shoshones.

"Let him who would take my place count as many scalps," said Washakie.

There was no more talk of deposing him.

I concluded to make a trip over the reservation before entering upon the negotiations, and proposed to the chiefs of the two tribes that they each appoint a committee of three men to accompany me. Washakie was too old to go himself, and he appointed his son and successor, Dick Washakie, and two others to go. Sharp Nose took two of his men, and went himself. In starting on the expedition I did, almost unconsciously, something that brought me very close to the Indians. Major Loud of the Ninth Cavalry, now retired, the commander at the post of Fort Washakie, Wyoming, had warned me not to attempt the trail through the Red Cañon; that there was a road forty miles longer, but safe. The other officers joined in Major Loud's advice. Sharp Nose said that he knew the trail. I thanked Major Loud and said I would follow the advice of Sharp Nose. That settled the matter with the Arapahoe chief, and when that night I talked Sioux with him, and he recalled how he had visited Sitting Bull at Standing Rock when I was agent and had provided him with food for the journey home, I knew there would be no question about the acceptance of the treaty by the Arapahoes. All through the magnificence of the Red Cañon I went with the Indians, and promised them that if the agreement was made, the right should be reserved to them and their children forever, of bathing in the thermal baths that their forefathers had used. I separated from them at the mouth of Owl Creek, and returned to the agency by another route, appointing to meet them at the agency in council on the following Monday.

The matter was settled before the council began. The session was of the briefest. I told the people what I thought they should do, and adjourned the council for three hours. During the adjournment there was a feast, and when the council met again they were ready to accept the agreement. It was simply an affair of meeting the Indian on his own ground and establishing a precedent in treaty-making which led to my occupation as treaty-maker for many years.

The Yankton Sioux owned, or claimed the ownership of, the famous pipestone quarry at Pipestone, Minnesota. Before Longfellow cast the glamour of romance about the pipestone quarry and attracted the attention of the English-speaking world to its existence, it was a sacred place to the Indians of a great portion of the country. From time immemorial, it has been a place of sanctuary. Warring bands and tribes fought about it; but since the pipestone was first found red, no Indian has shed blood on the ground. The Indian tradition is that there was a great battle between two warring tribes, and that so much blood was spilled that it soaked into the ground and turned the clay red. Since that day no Indian has shed blood at the quarry. The Sioux, pursued by the Chippewa or Winnebago, who could reach the pipestone quarry was safe, — his life was inviolate so long as he remained under the protection of the spirits who guarded the pipestone. It was a place of sanctuary, as safe as was the church of the Middle Ages.

From all parts of the country Indians came to cut out the red pipestone, mining for it in the dry bed of the creek and distributing the material for pipes over a vast area of country in which the white man had not yet set foot. The clay was easily cut out, being of the consistency of hard cheese. On exposure to the air it hardened, and was carved into the various forms affected by the Indian artisan in pipe-making. The land upon which the quarry is located was held by the Sioux for many years. In their wars with the Chippewas and Winnebagoes they eventually asserted their right to the territory in the midst of which the quarry lies. But the place they had so jealously guarded for generations was entirely overlooked by the bands of the Sioux who were parties to the various treaties, with the exception of the Yanktons.

In the treaty of 1858 this band incidentally reserved their title to the pipestone quarry, and specifically by their agreement of 1893, under the provisions of an act passed through the influence of the then Senator Frank A. Pettigrew, of South Dakota, which provided that, if the Supreme Court did not decide otherwise in one year from the date of the ratification of the agreement, the tract of land embracing the quarry should belong to the Yankton Sioux. The Yanktons filed notice of their ownership at the expiration of the year specified, and proceeded to claim the land. There are six hundred and forty-eight acres in the tract involved in the claim. The other Sioux tribes set up claims to equal ownership with the Yanktons, but the latter had established their right by the reservation incorporated in the treaty of 1858. In the spring of 1899 I was sent to treat with the Yanktons for the cession of the tract upon which the pipestone quarry is located, and upon which there is a modern school-plant for Indian youth.

It must be said for the Yanktons that they immediately put a price on the sentimental interest that attached to the quarry. They asked a million dollars flat for the six hundred and forty-eight acres. The figure was an absurd one, but it does not do to laugh at the Indian in bargaining with him. I told them they would have to cut down the price or all negotiations might as well be called off at once. Then there followed a great deal of dickering and much speech-making. At one time I had them practically argued into accepting seventy-five thousand dollars for the tract; but when I might have closed with them at that price the following day, I was called away to Tuba, Arizona, on important business, and the matter was allowed to stand for several months. When I returned to close the deal with the Yanktons, they had got the price up again and I was glad to close with them for a compensation of one hundred thousand dollars. The agreement was signed October 2, 1899, but it is still unconfirmed.

The agreement that I made with the Northern Cheyennes in 1898 differed from the ordinary run of treaties, in that it required the buying out and removal of settlers and the confirmation of the Indians in their right to the country that had been occupied. In carrying out my instructions, I found it necessary not only to buy out ranchers and individual settlers on a small scale, but actually to buy up the town of Hutton, Montana, which had been located on the reservation lands, through the incorrectness of a map of that portion of Custer County.

The Cheyennes, who, by the way, had always been a fierce and warlike people, occupied a country that teems with Indian story and is watered by streams that have been celebrated as hunting-grounds. The agency at Lame Deer was named for the rover of that name, but it preserves the memory of a great warrior, Chief Lame Deer, who was in the Custer affair, and who was killed by a command under General Miles in the pursuit that followed the scattering of the bands after the battle of the Little Big Horn. The country is watered by the Tongue River, Rosebud, Lame Deer, and Muddy Creeks, and had been the hunting-ground of the Northern Cheyennes for generations. They had defended it against their neighbors, the Crows, Blackfeet, Piegans, and Bloods. They were to some extent allied to the Sioux, and generally acted with them in the sanguinary affairs that marked their savage life. No Indian was prouder of his race and tribe than the Cheyenne, and they were warriors to be respected. Their advance in the arts of civilization was handicapped by their warlike attributes, and they were not curbed for many years after the other warlike tribes had accepted the conditions imposed by the white man. An incident that occurred at the Lame Deer agency in 1890 illustrates with much force their adherence to the peculiar code they lived by.

A young man named Hugh Boyle had been killed by the Cheyennes. The authorities demanded that the Indians give up the murderers to justice. The Indians tried to settle the matter. According to their ideas, the death of Boyle might be compensated by the payment of ponies. They offered to give up a great number of horses, raising each bid as it was rejected, until the payment proposed was calculated to beggar them if it was accepted. To the ponies they added all their wealth in blankets and such other evidences of riches as an Indian may possess. They were finally made to understand that the white man did not accept a property atonement for the spilling of blood. The negotiations were carried on for some time and with difficulty, for the reason that few white men know the Cheyenne language. It is extremely difficult for a white man to master it, — indeed I know of no white man who has mastered the language. The intercourse with the people was carried on through mixed-bloods of the tribe, and it was finally made clear to them that they must give up the slayers of Boyle. But they could not give them up to die the death that kills the soul as well as the body. They believed, in common with most Indians, that when a man died his soul left the body with his last breath, and that in case a person was hanged, the soul was confined in the body with the rope. They would defend their young men from such an awful fate as was involved in the hanging by the white man's justice. The crime they neither denied nor defended. An ultimatum being sent them that they must bring in the murderers, they sent word back that a Cheyenne was not afraid to die, but would not submit to being hanged; that the two young men, Head Chief and Young Mule, would show the whites how a Cheyenne could die.

They appointed a date for the affair, September 13, 1890, and they intended that it should be magnificently spectacular. They were to bend their necks to the white man's justice, but they proposed doing it in a fashion that would impress the soldiers and the people at the agency. Special Indian Agent James A. Cooper had asked for troops, and one troop of the First Cavalry had been sent to the agency to make the arrest of the two men by force if necessary. The Cheyennes gave up diplomacy when the troops arrived, and word was sent that the two Indians would give themselves up and be ready to die. They appointed to die with their weapons in their hands. They would not submit to surrender alive, but they would ride into the agency and there meet the troops. They would shoot at the soldiers, and the latter would have to kill them in defending themselves. The proposition was rather a startling one, but there was nothing to do but accept it. An attempt to arrest the men in their camps would assuredly have precipitated a bloody conflict. The proposition of the Cheyennes was for a spectacular form of suicide, and the matter was arranged on this basis. The Cheyennes accepted it all as a matter of course. The young men went about their affairs as usual, unmolested, and spent much time in visiting with and saying good-by to their relatives. The night before the date set for the finish, there were solemn dances, in which the Indians all took part. They were to meet death as warriors, and there was no reason why they should be mourned for.

The morning of the appointed day the two men were anointed by the medicine men. They painted and decorated themselves with great care, and wore all their finery. Their best horses were chosen for the ride to death, and the animals were devoted to the same fate that was to be meted out to their masters; for it was unlikely that they could escape the hail of bullets that would be sent at the doomed men. Thus, attired and mounted as warriors should be, the two rode down the slope from the northeast to the agency, where the troops were drawn up.

The agency is located on a flat, with a rather sharp declivity across Lame Deer River. The flat is almost surrounded by elevations, and on the ridge to the west the Indians, probably every one on the reservation, were assembled to see the young men demonstrate to the whites how a Cheyenne could die. Beside the agency office the troop of cavalry was drawn up; alongside of them stood the agency Indian police, close to their headquarters. The agency people were scattered about, out of what might be the line of fire when the shooting began. Never was a stage so set for so spectacular a tragedy.

At the time appointed for the coming of the men, they appeared at the top of the hill to the northeast, and dashed down the hill at the best pace their horses could make. As they rode they sang the death-song of their people, and before reaching the level ground they began shooting into the ranks of the soldiery and Indian police.

The fire was answered at once, the cavalrymen firing rapidly, but ineffectively. The Indian police, or one of them, made better practice, for one of the Indians went down with his horse in a heap just as he reached a little clump of bushes. The bullets of the police and the soldiers could not find the other man. They fired at almost point-blank range, but his life was charmed. He rode shooting and singing past the cordon of troops and policemen, out beyond the agency, then turned and rode deliberately back. He had passed the troops the second time before the fire of the soldiers and police was effective. His pony was hit and sank, and the man himself was shot and killed at the same time. One of the white party was wounded and one horse killed.

It was finished, and the Indians closed in and took the bodies away with them to make mourning. No man who witnessed the affair could ever forget that those two Cheyennes had demonstrated that a Cheyenne could die as became a brave man, and the Indians to this day will not approach the place of their death after dark. The spirits of the two warriors haunt the place, according to the Cheyenne belief.

It was with this people that I had to treat, and incidentally with the numerous whites, in adjusting the Indian claim to the entire reservation. Many of the settlers and ranchers had gone on to the land in good faith, and they had legal claims to their holdings. There was another class of men who had bought out the original settlers, and these had an undoubted equitable right. There was still another class of people, who had gone on to the land knowing that they had no rights, but hoping that something might occur to give them title. These had to be removed. The Indians knew their rights; a people capable of doing what the two men accused of killing Boyle had done, might be expected to stand sturdily by those rights. The big men among them, American Horse, Two Moons, and Little Chief, were men of intelligence, and their people a fine manly lot. It took six weeks to adjust the purchase and to complete the arrangement for the conveyance back to the government of the property. My engagements called for the payment to the whites of about $151,000.

March 1, 1898, I concluded an agreement with the Lower Brule Sioux that involved more difficulties and required more finesse in getting the people concerned to a state of mind where they would act than any other work that has fallen to my lot. I was instructed to make an agreement that would permit the removal of four hundred and fifty Indians at the Lower Brule agency, South Dakota, from their reservation and their transfer to the Rosebud Indian reservation in the same state. This particular lot of Brules had made up their minds that they wanted to move; but the rest of the people of the Lower Brule reservation had made up their minds quite as fully that they did not want them to move. Their withdrawal would take away such a proportion of the funds belonging to the people in common, as the number of those moving bore to the whole number belonging to the agency. There was a nice condition to adjust there. When that was effected, it was necessary for me to go to the Rosebud Indians, and convince the Indians of that agency that they wanted these Lower Brules to live with them — and at first they most assuredly did not want them.

It was a delicate piece of work, but it had to be performed; for when an Indian gets it into his head that he wants to move, the best thing for the government to do is to move him under the least disagreeable circumstances. These four hundred and fifty Indians had quite made up their minds to move, the others of their band had quite made up their minds that they did not want them to move, and the Rosebuds would not have them.

First, it was necessary to get the Lower Brules to agree to the ceding to the United States of about one hundred and twenty thousand acres of land in their reservation, which would be the portion of the seceders, and to agree to the setting over to the seceding crowd of their portion of the permanent fund. It was rather a nice job, and there were all sorts of difficulties, but those were finally adjusted. Then I went over to the Rosebuds and asked them to cede to the new comers a sufficiency of land for their maintenance, and they demanded *quid pro quo*, which was, of course, ample. They came around to the proper point of view, Indian fashion, taking the longest way round, and on March 10, 1898, the agreement was signed, the head men coming round and the others following pretty promptly. The transfer was effected.

Three years later I went to these same Indians with a proposition involving an agreement for the cession of a great body of land that was required for settlement by the whites. The land lay in Gregory County, South Dakota, and there were about four hundred and sixteen thousand acres in the tract. The deal was a big one, and there were many big talks. The Indian had come to a proper appreciation of the value of his holdings, and the government had not yet taken the position that there should be no appropriation for the purchase of the lands needed, that the government would only take over the lands and dispose of them to settlers, holding the funds in trust for the Indians, but guaranteeing nothing, except that there would be a fixed price per acre charged to the settlers. The Rosebuds did not like the deal, and it was a case where I had to use personal influence to bring the agreement about. The people of South Dakota were very anxious to open the lands, and the rush to Bonesteel and the surrounding country resulting from this cession is still remembered. I talked to the chiefs and head men. I was well known to them, and they had confidence that I would not do anything that was opposed to their interest. But they were not easily moved. I made the agreement finally, securing the signatures to it September 14. The amount of money to be received by the Indians, under the terms of the sale, was $1,040 000.

The picturesque features of treaty-making with the Indians, the council and formal speeches, have not always been obtruded in the latter-day negotiations with them. Since the government very wisely ordained that the Indians should no longer be regarded as an alien people, and the treaties with them should be described as agreements, there have been long strides made in the direction of ultimate assimilation of the red people. I would not have it understood that I believe that the Indian is in any immediate danger of absorption into the general body of the whites of this country; but they have foregone their customs to a great extent, and given evidences of adaptability that they could not have been credited with a generation ago. Indian human nature is pretty much the same as it always was. The Indian at heart is the same as ever. He is simple-minded and direct. He must not be reckoned with as a man who recognizes and understands the canons of the white man. He does not conceive of our standards. A discarded stove-pipe hat is no longer his idea of full dress, and a blanket no longer marks the circumference of his world. He is given much to the forms of law. The Indian is a natural litigant, and it is to be regretted that he is prone to this. He believes implicitly in the capacity of the white man's courts to remedy all wrongs, and is disposed to hire a lawyer whenever he gets a chance. There are bands and communities of Indians in this country who practically maintain the lobbies hired by law firms at Washington, and who often go hungry, when the fees they pay to lawyers would supply them with the material necessities of life.

There was the case of the claim of the Otoe and Missouria, tribes that have never made any claims to the attention of the white man, except among those who occupy their hereditary lands. They live in Oklahoma, having many years ago given up lands they held in Nebraska and Kansas. These lands were occupied by white men, and so involved had the rights of the parties become, that it was a matter of the utmost difficulty properly to adjust them. One thing was very certain, — that the Indians had a valid claim, that they had not been paid for their lands, and that in equity something should be done to give them some compensation for the lands that had been occupied by and tilled by the whites. In 1899 a proposition had been made to the Otoe and Missouria, and it had been rejected. The failure of the attempt to make an agreement left the matter in such shape that it was difficult of approach; but I was sent to talk to the people. A proposition was prepared for submission, which I was convinced would not be acceptable to the Indians, — which proposition had been framed by an attorney of Cheyenne, Wyoming; and upon my submitting it to the people it was rejected, and the interested parties who had accompanied me left in disgust, regarding the matter hopeless.

I thought I knew the Indian attitude of mind well enough to feel assured that, if the people were talked to, they might be brought to see the advantage of accepting a modified proposition, rather than to let it drag along for many years more. In Gage County, Nebraska, and Marshall County, Kansas, where the lands were located, the settlement had become a political issue. Congressmen had been elected and candidates defeated on it. Some of the people who had bought the lands had been induced to bid far beyond their actual value, with the understanding that only a fixed maximum would be accepted in payment. The titles were not clear, and the situation was much involved.

After the original proposition had been rejected, I prepared and submitted a modified proposition, and in five days I had made the agreement and the matter was settled. It was merely a matter of being familiar with the Indian character. The people, red and white, were saved from endless litigation, a vexed question was settled, which could never have been so satisfactorily adjusted in the courts, and both whites and Indians got their rights.

It is an odd condition that the Pacific States Indians, who were by no means the equals of the plains Indians physically or mentally in their native state, have progressed beyond their better-developed brethren in the civilized arts. The ethnologists have discovered a great many remarkable things about the Coast Indians, and many of these things would astonish the Indians themselves. The probabilities are that they were wandering divisions, who in the processes of natural law were forced to the west because they could not survive among their more vigorous and warlike brethren. It is a far cry from the Mission Indians of the southwest coast to the Chilcat family on the north; and, while the former were subjected to the civilizing influences of the early missionaries, the more northern tribes were exposed to the demoralization that must have followed contact with the sailors and early explorers. Having inhabited generally a country in which the physical conditions interfered with easy intercourse, these people became isolated to that point which made great differences in language. Then, also, they were of different original stocks and carried the parent languages with them. Thus it was that, in closely contiguous communities, the various Indian tribes of the coast had little or no communication with each other. The policy of the government which led to their assemblage in considerable numbers on a reservation, paid no heed to tribal affiliations; and in most instances people of varied languages and customs were placed on the same reservation. They were not strong in tribal numbers, and they gained nothing in the way of concessions for lands, having no ownership rights. Placed on the same reservation, and compelled to provide their own subsistence, — being wards of the government without available appropriations, — they had to adopt a common language, and they took to English readily enough. Having no hope or expectancy of assistance from the government, they worked out their own material salvation, perforce. As a consequence, they are farther advanced than the Indians of whom much more might have been expected. Many of them, though only a couple of generations removed from a people living on roots and fish, to whom even reptiles were not unfamiliar articles of diet, have acquired all the better habits of the whites, and their social condition is not infrequently rather better than that of the people among whom they live and who boast European blood.

I made an agreement with the Port Madison Indians, Washington, composed of remnants of tribes, in which all the negotiations were conducted in English. In the Round Valley reservation, California, I found

Indians of heterogeneous tribes, who spoke English wholly, and who were Diggers of abject condition two generations ago.

The independence of the Indian in his tribal state was exemplified in a manner that I have referred to before, in the custom of the head man and speaker representing his people against his own views. I had an agreement to make with the Red Lake Chippewas. It involved the cession of lands that might be worth a million dollars. Moose Dung was the hereditary tribal chief. He was rather a smart fellow, and his father had been a great warrior, so eminent that a title had been given him for the section of land on which the city of Thief River Falls, Minnesota, is now located. He sold the section for eight thousand dollars and showed the whites of Minnesota how an Indian could spend money for a while, and eventually some of the other heirs, who had not been consulted in the expenditure of the money, had to be settled with. In the council with the Chippewas, Moose Dung, who was in favor of the cession, was compelled by the instructions of the Indian council to make an argument that was entirely opposed to his views — which did not prevent him, however, from going out personally and influencing the Indians to accept the proposition submitted.

ON THE SHORES OF CALAYUQUOT SOUND (Nootka)
Edward S. Curtis Photo

THE VANISHING RACE (Navaho)
Edward S. Curtis Photo

CHAPTER XVIII

CAPTAIN JACK AND HIS MODOCS

Events leading up to the Ferocious Fighting in the Lava-Beds called the Modoc War — The Crimes of Hooker Jim and Curly-Headed Doctor — The Surrender and Death of Jack.

I KNOW of no better evidence of the capacity of the Indian to adapt himself to new conditions — when he finds those conditions immutable — than was called to my attention in a trip to the Klamath-Modoc country in southern Oregon a few years ago, when I was told that within six years of the frightful affair of the Lava-Beds, one of Captain Jack's men, a fierce and bloody man who was prominent in the assassination of the commissioners at the council that led to the finish of the Modocs as a fighting band, — that this man, "Steamboat Frank," had been ordained to the Christian ministry and put in charge of a church on the Quapaw reservation.

And I know of no more fitting place for such battle as was given the whites by Captain Jack and his handful of people, than the Lava-Beds. The idea that a white man might subsist in the Lava-Beds is hardly conceivable, but that the Indians lived and fought therein against desperate odds is easily conceivable to one who knows what the Indian can endure when he is compelled to it. A couple of score of white men fighting several hundred Indians, furnished with the modern machinery of warfare, would not last the day through. Yet for many days Captain Jack and his Modocs lived in the Lava-Beds, sustaining life by eating reptiles when they could not capture any of the provender of the enemy; lived and fought with almost no loss, and inflicting terrible injuries on the soldiers who were sent against them. The battle might have been a classic except that it was not warfare, but the desperate defense of a handful of ragamuffin Indians who had been despised for years, — it opened with a massacre and ended with the scaffold.

The story of the Modoc war I had from many sources, and told in more than one tongue, — from army officers who participated in it, who could not go back and dwell on the horror of that campaign without confessing that language failed them when their thoughts went back to the awful days and nights of the summer of 1873; from Indians who told of it in fragments — as something that was not safe to talk of, for the fear of the white man's vengeance still abode with them; from men of the Indian service who were of the party of whites and had to do with the affair; from Mrs. Toby Riddle, the Indian woman who had accompanied the commissioners when they were shot down by the fiends who, headed by Captain Jack, did what an Indian has seldom done in breaking a pledge given for the safe passport to a peace council.

At the time of my visit Mrs. Riddle was still living near the scene of the affair, an Indian woman full of years but not infirm, whose heroic action in bringing out word of the attack by the Modocs on the peace commissioners was recognized by the government, and who is perhaps the only woman drawing a pension of twenty-five dollars a month as a reward for her own daring and desperate deed.

Men who had to do with the stirring events of the Modoc war, whose families were then on the ground, as they are still, gave me the story and verification of disputed points. The Applegates were prominent people of the Klamath and Modoc country in the days of the war, as they are now. Major O. C. Applegate was agent for the Klamaths and Modocs when I visited the Klamath agency, in 1900 and again in 1901. When the Modoc trouble broke out, Major Applegate was in charge of the Yainax sub-agency. Yainax is forty miles east of Klamath agency, in Oregon. His brother, Jesse Applegate, was a captain of militia, and both had active part in the campaign. To both of these gentlemen I am much indebted for information and verification of the narrative here given.

Rev. Jesse Kirk, an educated full-blood Klamath Indian and ordained Methodist minister, was my guide and interpreter during a tour of three weeks over the Klamath and Modoc reservation in 1900. He was thoroughly familiar with the Modoc outbreak and the campaign that followed it, and he related with the assurance of an eye-witness things that have become involved in historical doubt. Of course there were many other sources of information, but the men mentioned spoke by the card and with intelligent discernment.

I did not appreciate the horror of that brief and bloody war in the Lava-Beds until I saw the country in October, 1900, when I was commissioned to go out there and make an agreement with the Klamaths and Modocs. In 1873, when the country was ringing with the news of the assassination of General Canby and Dr. Thomas, and the stories of the furious fighting that followed, I was on the Devils Lake reservation. We had some troubles of our own, for the Indians were restless — they were hearing of the doings of their cousins across the Missouri — and, incidentally, we were being continually bothered by the raids of horse-thieves from Turtle Mountain and the west. But even in that country, remote as it was from the scene of the trouble, little else was talked about at the agency at the time, for the desperate character suddenly assumed by the Modocs was calculated to impress white men who had to do with keeping red men pastured along the borderland of civilization. The sudden ferocity of Captain Jack and his people contained a menace we could not help feeling; and when, many years later, I was brought into contact with the survivors of Captain Jack's band, it was not easy to conceive that these spiritless people could have held the country awed a generation ago, when their outlandish names were on every tongue. They were an amiable enough lot when I first saw them, but the shining lights of their band — Captain Jack, Scarfaced Charlie, Schonchin John, Bogus Charlie, Shacknasty Jim — had all gone the way of the Indian, good or bad, some of them by the rope-route, others in beds of the white man's providing, but very few by the bullets of the soldiers they fought in the Lava-Beds.

It has often occurred to me that, in the term of my service in the Indian department, the red man has run the gamut between the limit of savagery and his possibilities in the line of civilization. The fact is exemplified in the transition of the Modoc of the Lava-Beds to the Modoc preacher of to-day.

The infernal gods, in horrid sport, might have made the Lava-Beds in a humor of frightful cynicism — to show how awful a thing the face of the earth might be made. The man of science would describe the Lava-Beds as a *pedregal*, — a Spanish word, I fancy, though adapted locally to the vernacular. It means a stony place, and the Spaniard who applied it first must have been woefully lacking in a knowledge of his vocabulary, for he totally failed to do the subject justice. The pedregal which was given a bloody fame as the Lava-Beds is forty or fifty square miles in area. The scriptural "abomination of desolation" fits it exactly. The surface of the Lava-Beds suggests the idea that a sea of molten lava and rocks had been hurled from on high, and that the earth, rebelling against the deluge, had opened its bosom in violent attempts to heave off the molten mass. In the contest the lava and rocks cooled, leaving great stones thrust out in impossible shapes from the volcanic ash; what might have been the surface, cleft in every direction by strange and awful chasms, would serve as the hiding-places for fearsome reptiles of an elder period. These chasms are described as caves, in the language of the country and by the Indians; but caves they assuredly are not, though many of them are almost entirely subterranean. In the Lava-Beds no green things grow, no spring moistens the chasms, there is no life nor sign of life, and civilized man halts at the boundary of the horrible place. For thousands of years the Lava-Beds served no conceivable purpose in nature, for even the beast of prey declined the pedregal for a hiding-place. Then, one day, it became a practically impregnable fortress, ready made to the hand of a band of desperate men who found themselves in arms against a great nation.

Fighting in this awful place, using its chasms for hiding-places and its rocky fastnesses for entrenchments, the Modocs killed eight officers, fifty-five soldiers and civilians, and two friendly Indians, and wounded sixty-nine whites, losing five warriors themselves during the tragic affairs of 1872 and 1873.

Like most of the tragedies of the Indian country, the Modoc war was chargeable to the bad faith of the white man and the dilatoriness of the government in making and executing a treaty. And it cannot even be said that the Indians were the aggressors in the shedding of blood, for it is certain that the first attack was made on the Modocs; that they were surprised and some of them killed, and that their first attack on the settlers was in the nature of a reprisal.

The Modocs were never a numerous tribe. When the whites first knew them they might have numbered four or five hundred — there are three or four hundred of them now. They were warlike enough and carried on a desultory warfare with the neighboring tribe, the Klamaths. Occasionally they fought the whites, and many of them died by smallpox in the later forties, and a number were killed by whites in the early fifties. They were industrious enough, but were not farmers. They made a sort of flour from the seeds of an aquatic plant, and hunted and fished. Their nomadic habits led the settlers to regard them as a nuisance, — a distinction they enjoyed in common with the Klamaths and the Yahoo Snakes, or Ya-hoos-kin; and this fact, that they were classed with the other Indians, had much to do with the disaster of 1873. They were of fighting stock, and their warring with the Klamaths had extended over many years; and, though they had held their own on the field, the Klamaths had gone further along the road of the white man, and had rather the best of the bargain when it was a matter of dealing with the Modocs. These latter ranged over a restricted country on the Oregon-California border, though they never got very far away from Lake Tule or Lost River. In spite of their industry, on occasion they were used to a life of vagabondage, and the ease with which they secured fish in the lake and river made them anxious to keep their country.

But the whites were settling in numbers, and it became necessary to restrict the Indians to certain limits; so in 1864 a treaty was made with the Klamaths, Modocs, and Yahoos, to take a reservation on common ground in Lake County, Oregon. Schonchin, at that time the chief of the Modocs, — though his title was challenged by Captain Jack, — was satisfied with the treaty and certainly had the following to control the tribe when the treaty was made. But it was not confirmed for years, — some time in 1870 it was proclaimed. In the meantime the mischief had been done.

It was alleged that they fell out over a division of the spoils — though it does not appear that there were any spoils to divide until 1867, when some annuity goods were issued to the Indians. Captain Jack declared that the Klamaths, under Captain George, had gotten the lion's share of the distribution. Schonchin appears to have been inclined to accept what was given him, and he was the recognized chief, while Jack only assumed leadership; but in high dudgeon the latter proclaimed himself a better man by rank and lineage than Schonchin and invited the band to follow him off the reservation. A very considerable number did so, and they roamed about the country, carrying on many petty depredations but doing no serious injury. But they were in defiance of authority, and the Modocs who remained on the reservation were continually at strife with the Klamaths. The Indian bureau established the Yainax agency, on the Sprague River in another part of the reservation, for the Modocs, and induced Captain Jack to join Schonchin there. They had more trouble with the Klamaths, and were again moved; again Jack left the reservation, and this time he had the better of Schonchin, for he took a majority of the people with him.

He lived with his band on Lost River and Lake Tule. He offered to accept a small reservation on the river, some two thousand acres; but the Indian bureau could not afford to be dictated to, and Jack was again wheedled into returning to Yainax. There the trouble with the Klamaths culminated, and the step was taken that made Jack and his people outlaws and brought on the war.

There is no doubt that the people had been in great distress. The constant moving about had made it difficult for them to get any returns from the crops they put in; the hunting and fishing did not support them, and the government annuity was not often forthcoming. Some of the Modocs died of disease or distress. From the death of one of these men arose the event that made Jack a wanderer.

The name of the sick man, like that of many another individual who had to do with the making of history, is lost to the memory of even Toby Riddle, who remembers most things in Modoc history. The brave stood well with Captain Jack, and when he fell ill, a Klamath medicine man was called in to attend him. Jack appears to have had a personal medicine man, Curly-Headed Doctor, but the latter was much more inclined to vagabondage than to the practice of his queer arts, and he had constituted himself the chief of a little band of eight or ten as fine scoundrels as had hitherto been gotten together in that country, and was engaged in stealing horses and cattle and whatever else would walk or was portable. So Jack was compelled to resort to Klamath medicine for his follower. The Klamath doctor performed spells and shook his rattle over the sick Modoc to no purpose, for he died.

I have referred elsewhere to the fact that it was customary among the coast tribes to kill a medicine man who professed to be able to cure, and then lost, a patient. From time immemorial it has been a recognized custom among the tribes west of the Rockies, and it has been practiced occasionally among other tribes, when a chief found a medicine man who was becoming too popular, to have him quietly removed. There is no manner of doubt that the custom has been indulged among the far-north Indians, the Chilcats and others allied to the Esquimaux, in very recent times. It carried with it no more suggestion of crime, under the tribal custom, than that other frightful practice of barbarism which permits the killing of the old people who become burdens on families in a country that yields no surplus of provisions even for those who can struggle for a living.

The medicine man who was called in the case of Captain Jack's warrior, made an implied contract to cure the man or forfeit his own life. In taking the job the medicine man practically announced that his medicine was superior to that of the evil genius who had laid hold of the sick man; hence, if he did not effect a cure, it was because he chose to let the man die, as he could not afford to admit that his medicine was not all-powerful.

The sick man died, and under the circumstances Captain Jack could not, according to his lights, do other than cut the throat of the medicine man, — which he did, or was charged with doing. It is not worth while inquiring into his guilt or innocence, but he was probably guilty as charged. And the crime might have gone unpunished if Jack's victim had been a Modoc. But he was a Klamath, and the Klamaths immediately set up a clamor, demanding that Jack be arrested and tried by the civil authorities for the killing.

At that time civil law was not often invoked in punishment of Indian offenses committed against Indians. But Jack was evidently afraid either that the authorities would act in the matter, or that the Klamaths would revenge the offense in their own way. In any event he moved off the reservation, and that his people were in sympathy with him was shown by the fact that two thirds of them moved with him. Schonchin's authority was finally broken then.

It does not appear that the conduct of the Modocs under Jack was particularly reprehensible at first. There were some other small bands, independent of Jack, as that of Curly-Headed Doctor, that made much more trouble. It is even apparent that Jack and his people lived on fairly good terms with the whites. They roamed into California, and, according to the newspapers of that day, they tried to save the town of Yreka, California, when it was destroyed by fire, July 4, 1871. They continued to make their headquarters on Lost River, and the military authorities, as well as the Indian authorities, were inclined to favor giving them the reservation they desired.

On the pacific attitude and the friendly disposition of the whites toward Captain Jack's Modocs, official records, made so late as the early spring of 1872, may be quoted. General E. R. S. Canby, then commander of the Department of the Columbia, and a man who knew the Indian very well, and was fated to lay down his life in trying to serve the Modocs, said: —

"I am not surprised at the unwillingness of the Modocs to return to any point on the reservation where they would be exposed to the hostilities and annoyances they have heretofore experienced from the Klamaths; but they have expressed a desire to be established on Lost River, where they would be free from this trouble, and the superintendent (Meacham) informed me last summer that he would endeavor to secure such a location for them."

This statement from General Canby indicates the justice of the cause of the Modocs, but it did not help them to secure the location they asked. Then they were not dealt with fairly and firmly, as an Indian must be under any and all circumstances. Superintendent Meacham was retired in favor of another man, who appointed two anti-Indian men to hold a council with the Modocs. The Modocs got a bad character from the report made, and the Indian bureau issued an order that the Modocs should be forced to return to their reservation and the leaders arrested. This order was evidently opposed to the expressed attitude of General Canby, who evidently felt that an injustice was being done the people.

It does not appear that anybody was to benefit materially by turning the Modocs out of the Lost River country; and if they had been given the reservation they asked for, not more than ten thousand dollars worth of land would have to be set apart for them — and upon this there were but few claimants to be negotiated with. This solution of the trouble would have been in accord with General Canby's views, and the war would have been thus averted; and these facts may be stated now that the healing influence of time has been felt and the crimes of the Modocs no longer cry for the blood-atonement. However, the order was given for the return of the Modocs to the reservation; troops were sent into the country to enforce the order, and it needed but that an overt act should be committed to begin the brief and bloody Modoc war.

On the night of November 28, 1872, Captain Jack and his band camped on the south side of Lost River; Curly-Headed Doctor with ten warriors, with their women and children, had a camp on the opposite bank, all in Oregon. The commanders of the troops were afraid that the Indians were getting ready for mischief, and early in the morning of the 29th Captain Jackson, with forty men, surprised Captain Jack's camp and demanded the surrender of the Indians.

A fight ensued, in which one white man was killed and seven injured. On the other side of the river a small detachment struck the camp of Curly-Headed Doctor at the same time. Of the attacking party one was killed, another mortally wounded, and Curly-Headed Doctor and his party made off on the war-path. Within two days twelve white settlers were killed by these marauders, it being certain that none of the murders were committed by Captain Jack's party, which was making south for the Lava-Beds.

Instantly there was a reversal of opinion concerning the capacity of the Modocs for mischief. The people of Oregon were up in arms and volunteers were plenty. While preparations for a demonstration in force were being made, Curly-Headed Doctor and a particularly ferocious scoundrel who was supporting him, and who attained to an evil fame under the name of Hooker (Hooka) Jim, together with eight or ten others, afterwards distinguished by both the whites and Indians as "the murderers," started after the surprise and killed six more white men; but it was not until the middle of the following January that the assault was made on the Lava-Beds.

Captain Jack appears to have been in charge of the Indians who had taken to the Lava-Beds, though he afterwards claimed that he acted wholly on the defensive, and that Schonchin had some part in the government. Neither Jack nor Schonchin had any sympathy with Curly-Headed Doctor and Hooker Jim, whose followers committed many atrocities, but the Doctor and his party joined Captain Jack in the Lava-Beds, and he permitted them to remain with his people. Had Captain Jack driven Curly-Headed Doctor and Hooker Jim out of his camp, affairs with him might have been different, for it was made apparent later that he did not want to fight the white soldiers. He said that he was led to believe that, should he and his people surrender after having taken to the Lava-Beds, they would be hanged without regard to their guilt or innocence. That this was not an idle defense was shown later in the statement made by the judge advocate of the military commission which tried and condemned Jack and his fellows, who said he was convinced that Jack had nothing to do with the murder of the settlers.

When the troops were ready to attack, about the middle of January, Captain Jack, with between fifty and sixty warriors and about one hundred and seventy women and children, was entrenched in the most tremendous natural fortification in the world — a place teeming with dangers quite incomprehensible to white men and incapable of sustaining life in any but savages. Jack and his Modocs knew the ground, while the troops had no conception of what the place was, and even the Indian scouts acting with the troops were apparently ignorant of its difficulties for assault.

The Modocs had no considerable quantity of provisions with them. They had killed a few cattle, but had driven none into the Lava-Beds with them. What food they had, they carried in the form of meat hastily killed; and that could not last beyond a few days. They had means of reaching the waterways and procuring fish, and they lived on such vermin as they could find for the rest. But they did have a competent military leader, who had an idea that, if they could win one battle with the whites, terms might be made. They knew the point at which the attack must be made, and Jack disposed of his men — all armed with muzzle-loading guns and revolvers, in such fashion as to command completely the point.

It is not clear that the Indian scouts with the whites knew where the Modocs were, for they led the troops in at the nearest point to the soldiers' base; and that, perhaps, was as sensible a move as any they could have made, not knowing anything of the ground. Of the four hundred men in the attacking party, two hundred and twenty-five were regulars with a couple of howitzers, twenty were Indian scouts, and the rest were volunteer militiamen. The advance on the Modoc position was made on the morning of January 17, 1873, the attacking party being divided into columns with instructions to form a junction after the enemy had been located. The impossibility of carrying out this order would have been apparent to anybody knowing the nature of the ground in the Lava-Beds, the fearful chasms running in every direction, as effectually blocking the union of the divided bodies as though they were miles apart instead of a few yards, as was generally the case. Once the troops had penetrated into the Lava-Beds all plans were useless; the only thing to do was to advance in whatever direction was possible, and it was soon found that, in whatever direction the advance was made, there were the Modocs.

Not that they could be seen. The only evidence that the whites had of their presence was the constant and deadly fire that was poured all day from behind impossible rocks, through crevices in what appeared to be solid walls of lava, and from out of fissures in the ground. But no Modoc showed his head during the day long enough for a soldier to get a shot at him. The advance was made on hands and knees, generally. There was none of the glory of war about the fighting. Walking being generally impossible in this place of horror, it was simply a case of crawling forward in the direction from which the least firing came; and the Modocs picked off the men when they would. No more heroic struggle to come up with and strike an enemy was ever attempted than was made by the command who went that first day into the Lava-Beds, and never was one more useless; for, when at night the troops were gotten out of the place of death, retreating and carrying their wounded with infinite pain and labor, they had made no more impression on the enemy than if they had shelled Mount Shasta. Twenty-eight wounded were brought out, and ten dead they had to leave to the Modocs.

The commanding officer of the troops appreciated the fearful difficulty of the task before him, and believed that it would take a much larger force than he had to dislodge the Modocs; so he asked for three hundred more men and four guns.

That was in the days of the "peace policy" proclaimed by President Grant; and now that much harm had been done and the state of public feeling in Oregon precluded any other sort of peace than would be procured by the hanging of the Indians, it was proposed that negotiations be opened with them. At first a commission of local men was appointed. Among its members were two of the Applegates, Jesse, a pioneer of the forties, and Oliver C. Applegate, the latter then in charge at Yainax and well acquainted with the Indians; A. B. Meacham, who had been agent and superintendent, was also a member. These men knew the Modocs so well that they declined to meet them in council, where they would be in the power of the Indians. The Modocs, split by internal differences, would not meet the commissioners except on their own grounds.

Another commission was then named, which included some very good friends of the Indians: Judge Roseborough of Yreka, Rev. Doctor Thomas, and L. S. Dyer, the latter then agent for the Klamath Indians. The commission got in touch with the Modocs, and some messages were exchanged, but nothing came of it. The Indians came to understand that the first thing required of them was the surrender to the justice of the white man of the eight or nine men in the band of Curly-Headed Doctor, known as the murderers. These men had committed brutal murders, and they preferred the comparative security of the Lava-Beds to the certainty of hanging at the hands of the whites.

Captain Jack was evidently in favor of a compromise, but he had not the power to control his people to the extent of surrendering the Doctor and Hooker Jim. He sent his sister, known as Princess Mary, in with a statement of his position. He could not surrender his men to certain death by hanging; if the whites wanted his horses to hang, he would give them up, but he could not give up men to die a death that would kill the soul as well as the body, — the Indians holding that death by strangulation would prevent the soul from escaping, and it would die with the body. Captain Jack's plea was not very specious, even from the Indian point of view. It simply made clear the fact that he was not in a position to make peace, for his people did not believe that peace would be possible for them while the killing of the settlers and the soldiers was unavenged; but he sent word that if the soldiers were sent away he would come in and take a reservation on Lost River. This proposition was so absurd that it was not heeded.

At this time it was certain that Captain Jack's chieftaincy was in jeopardy. He knew that he must lose in the end, and he did not see that he had enough at stake to go on with a hopeless war. It was shown at his trial that he wanted to resign his command, and that the rest of the Modocs, especially those whose necks were in most imminent danger, insisted upon retaining him in the leadership. His sister, Princess Mary, said afterwards that she expected Curly-Headed Doctor, Hooker Jim, Schonchin, Bogus Charley, and some of the others planned to kill him, but were afraid of the majority. But Jack would not fight, and he would not talk. He sat down and bemoaned his fate. When he proposed to the whites to stop the war and take the Lava-Beds for a reservation — a last desperate resort — and his proposition was rejected, he said he would do no more. And he persisted in this determination until his followers reviled him and called him a squaw. This remark, together with the attitude of his people at the time, aroused him to such an extent that he immediately announced that he would lead them to the finish, and that they should have no further ground for complaint.

Toby Riddle saw him about this time. She had guided her husband, the interpreter, and a delegate from the commission, to the Modoc stronghold for a conference. The delegate, Judge Steele, would have been killed but for the interference of Captain Jack, who guarded him personally. Toby says that, when she left the camp, a friendly Modoc told her not to come back again, nor to send any white man, else he would not return alive; and an evident plot on the part of the Modocs was discovered when the commissioners were invited to a council and armed Indians were seen in the vicinity.

The personnel of the commission had been changed again, and when a proposition was brought in by Bogus Charley for a meeting of six unarmed Indians with as many whites, General Canby, who appreciated the danger of the undertaking, thought it his duty to attempt to make a peace and agreed to the proposition; but Mr. Meacham, L. S. Dyer, Interpreter Riddle, and his wife Toby all said that it was going to certain death. Dr. Thomas said that it was a duty they owed to themselves, to the Indians, and to the people, and he would go. Meacham and Dyer agreed to go, and Riddle said he would go as a matter of duty, but he protested against the foolhardiness of it.

The meeting was arranged for April 11, and it was to take place at what the Indians called the council tent, a natural sheltered place in the rocks. Bogus Charley accompanied the party, having remained in the camp of the whites the previous night, and they were met by Boston Charley and led to the Modoc council tent. General Canby, Dr. Thomas, and Riddle walked; Meacham, Dyer, and Toby Riddle were mounted. They were met at the council tent by Captain Jack, Schonchin, Ellen's Man, Shacknasty Jim, Hooker Jim, and Black Jim.

The council was very brief, and the whites feared treachery from the first; for they observed that all the Modocs were armed with revolvers, while they were unarmed. Jack made a speech, but while he was still talking Hooker Jim tried to start trouble by taking Meacham's overcoat from his saddle. Jack made some absurd demands and Meacham said, "Jack, you are a sensible man, talk like one." Schonchin told Meacham to talk straight, and demanded that the Modocs be given a reservation on Cottonwood Creek or Hot Creek, and that the soldiers be taken away. Schonchin was very much excited and Jack was standing up. At the instant two Indians appeared from behind the rocks and ran in with some guns. They were identified as One-Eyed Jim and Slolox. Steamboat Frank, whose destiny led him into the pulpit some years later, ran up at the same time. Then Captain Jack, who was standing up in front of General Canby, said, "All ready!" and drawing his revolver, snapped it in the general's face. It missed fire, and he instantly pulled the trigger again, shooting the veteran soldier under the eye.

It was shown at the trial of these Indians that each one had his appointed victim, and all acted as Jack did. Bogus Charley, who had led the commissioners into the trap, shot Dr. Thomas in the left breast, wounding him badly; Schonchin fired at Meacham but missed, and Meacham drew a small derringer and fired, then ran, but was shot in the head and fell apparently dead. Dyer ran at the first sign of treachery. He was pursued by Hooker Jim, but he drove the murderer off and escaped. Shacknasty Jim and One-Eyed Jim attacked Riddle, but he got away, being hit once, the bullet cutting off a piece of his ear. Slolox struck Toby Riddle with his rifle and was about to kill her, when Jack interfered and let her go. General Canby, who had not been killed by Captain Jack's shot, also ran, but was brought down by a rifle-shot, and Jack then stabbed him in the neck, killing him.

Toby Riddle, who was riding off, stopped and saved Meacham. He was lying apparently dead, and Boston Charley started to scalp him. The woman screamed, "The soldiers are coming!" and the other Indians, who were already afraid of the consequences of their dreadful deed, ran away, Boston Charley with the rest. Meacham was wounded four times, but lived, though he was so near dead that the Modocs, thinking him dead, had stripped him before Boston Charley had begun to scalp him. He ever after bore a long scar on his hand, made by the scalping-knife that was stopped by Toby Riddle.

I do not believe that the Modocs at that time thought there was any way of escaping the gallows, or death at the hands of the soldiers. Their attack on the envoys of an enemy was against all the traditions of their people. A safe-conduct given by a chief had always been held as sacred by the fighting races, even under the most exasperating circumstances — and the whites had not always been so scrupulous in carrying out like pledges. But there was not the slightest doubt that the assassination had been deliberately planned and as deliberately carried out. That it was not more effective — that the whole party of white people was not killed — was obviously not due to a lack of good-will on the part of the Modocs to carry out their plan, but rather to good fortune attending the survivors. And the horror of the affair was added to by the fact that General Canby and Dr. Thomas were the only men among the commissioners who had complete faith in the good intentions of Jack and his people.

It was said afterwards that Captain Jack was insane at the time of the assassination; but the skill he displayed later in the fighting showed that his insanity — if he was mentally affected — was only a mania for the spilling of the blood of the white man. The impudence of the attack proved that the Indians believed their position exceedingly strong and that they did not conceive of the strength in pursuit that would be shown by the whites under such a spur.

The affair set the country afire. The proponents of the peace policy had not a word to say when a war of extermination was demanded and proclaimed — for General Canby and Dr. Thomas were foremost among the peace people. The troops were within striking distance, and even while the shots fired at the white commissioners were echoing through the Lava-Beds, they were advancing to the scene of the council, only to find the Indians fled, with all the fight taken out of them for the moment by the bold ferocity of the killing. It was evidenced that the Modocs were all affected by the same desire to kill under any circumstances, for Scarfaced Charlie and another Indian had fired on and mortally wounded Lieutenant Sherwood, who had come out of his camp in response to the call of a couple of Indians carrying a flag of truce. Charlie fired from ambush. The troops moved into the Lava-Beds beyond the council tent, but saw no sign of the Modocs and withdrew, carrying out the bodies of General Canby and Dr. Thomas.

At that day the board of strategy in Indian warfare sat in the newspaper offices of the east. When the story of the killing reached the wise men who conducted such affairs of the government, there was a howl against the Modocs, but incidentally it was suggested that it might well apply to Indians generally. The soldiers were quite of a mind with the newspaper editors, but those on the borders of the Lava-Beds were confronted by a condition, not a theory. The Modocs would not come out and be exterminated. The situation was illustrated in an incident told of "Bob" Toombs, a member of the Confederate cabinet in the early days of the Civil War.

When hostilities were impending Toombs said, "We can whip those d—d Yankees with popguns." After the war, when Toombs was in exile, a Job's-comforter sort of friend recalled his remark and asked him what he thought of the Yankees then.

"I said we could whip 'em with popguns," said Toombs, "and I think so still; but, d—n 'em, they would n't fight that way!"

The Modocs declined to come out and be killed, and the soldiers had to make war according to the plan of the enemy.

A general and determined attack was made on what was supposed to be the Modoc position on the morning of the 14th of April. The Warm Spring scouts had located a part of the Modocs along the line of one of the frightful crevices that seam the face of the country. A mortar battery was brought up and the soldiers advanced under cover of its fire. The Indians were located by the gunners, and in two days' fighting — during which very few soldiers set eyes on a Modoc headcloth — more execution was done by the shelling of the "cave" than by any other means during the succeeding engagements. A tremendous weight of metal, for that day and country, was thrown into the Indian position, and eleven Indians were killed, eight of them being women. It was told afterwards that one of the men came to his death by trying to bite off the burning fuse of a shell that dropped near him. He was blown to pieces.

Captain Jack fought his people — men and women — with savage and deadly skill. They were absolutely protected from the rifle-fire of the soldiery, the rocks and crevices, the caves and chasms of the field affording a cover that was never exposed except when a puff of smoke showed for an instant where an Indian had been concealed — for the Indian was never there after he had picked out a man and fired deliberately. The bullets of the soldiers flattened against the walls of rock, while the missiles of the Indian too often found a billet, as was shown in the list of casualties. Six soldiers were killed and fourteen wounded. Captain Jack, not being handicapped by lack of strong positions to which he might withdraw, put the battery out of service on the morning of the 17th by retreating with all his people through the crevice he had held. The Indians were a mile away before it was known that they had gone, and it was found that the earth had been cloven by some frightful convulsion of nature, and a gash a mile long, broken by sink-holes, had afforded the Modocs a safe and sure method of retreat through what was effectually a bomb-proof passage. So well covered was the retreat that it took the Warm Spring scouts, under Donald McKay, a skillful and intelligent frontier-man, six days to locate them.

Elaborate preparations were completed by April 26 for an advance on the part of the Indian scouts and a body of troops on a reconnaissance in force into the centre of the fissure-creviced field of rock. A sand-hill commanding a considerable range of country from the midst of the Lava-Beds was the objective point, and Captain Thomas, fourth Artillery, was sent with fourteen scouts and sixty-four men, under six officers, to see if it was practicable to take the mortar and supplies in.

There has been a great deal of criticism indulged in regarding the courage of some of the men in the party, an official report condemning some of those who returned unarmed; but it was not in human nature to resist an opportunity to escape from certain slaughter that impended over the command before it had proceeded very far into the Lava-Beds; for the Indians appear to have permitted the advance only in order to make the more certain of their aim. The command advanced in open skirmish order, but the nature of the country, the obvious impossibility of defending themselves in case of attack, the experience of the past, all contributed to make the troops fearful of what they were doing. The march was carried on with infinite difficulty on account of the broken nature of the ground. No interference was met with, other than the natural conditions, until noon, by which time the command had reached the base of the sand-hill and a halt was made. The sand-hill is fairly in the centre of an irregular piece of ground, which afforded no opportunity for shelter; it is surrounded at a distance of about a quarter of a mile by ridges of lava. These ridges rise at once from the open. The men on the sand-hill offered outstanding targets for Indians concealed in the rocky ridges, firing from shelter that was almost absolute.

And the Modocs were there. Having allowed the little command to enter the trap, they made their presence manifest when a couple of men started out to reconnoitre one of the ridges. The Warm Springs scouts had been sent out from the body of the command, and they were within reach of shelter when a couple of shots proclaimed the presence of the enemy. A number of white men of the command ran for cover when the firing started, the main body starting up the sand-hill. Only the fact that the Modocs were not good marksmen at long range, and were insufficient in numbers to attempt to move in, saved the whites from annihilation. The officers, inspired by undaunted courage, made the most desperate attempts to get their men to a place of safety, or some sort of shelter, but in vain. Where they attempted to force the ridges, there they found the Indians. With astonishing rapidity, aided by a thorough knowledge of the ground and the paths through the ridges and crevices, the Modocs anticipated every attempt to move in force. The whites were scattered, and one body of twenty men under Captain Thomas, being isolated, was practically wiped out. The Warm Springs scouts tried to join the soldiers, but were fired on by the troops, who mistook the scouts for hostiles. Five of the six officers in the party, Captain Thomas, Lieutenants Howe, Cranston, Wright, and Harris, were killed, as were eighteen men; and seventeen men were wounded, several of them dying as a result of their wounds. In the afternoon Major Greene, with a strong force, relieved the survivors, but had to camp on the battle-ground all night to prevent the Modocs, who were still hidden in the rocks, from scalping the dead and injured. The Indians drew off in the morning, and it was found later that but one of them had been killed during the affair.

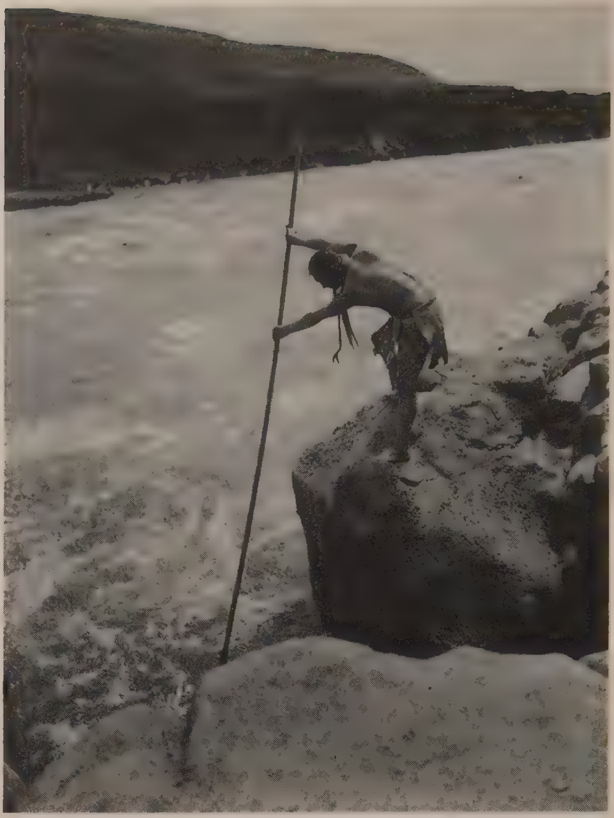
For many days the Lava-Beds were as quiet and desolate as though the Modocs had been entombed in their caves. No sign of them could be discovered by the scouts, and the location of Jack and his men remained a mystery to the troops camped chafing on the border of the awful country, until a couple of squaws came in and said the Modocs had moved off to the southeast. The next day the scouts brought in a report that a supply train had been attacked and captured near Lake Tule, three of the escort being wounded. A detachment of cavalry was sent in pursuit of the Indians, and for once Captain Jack, or some of his unruly insubordinates, made an error, by attacking the cavalry. The surprise was complete, being timed for the early morning of May 10; but the cavalrymen forced the fighting, compelled the Indians to retire, and chased them into the Lava-Beds. The main body had been advised of the attack, and General Jefferson C. Davis, who had taken personal command, threw a number of detachments into the uninviting field, and a number of posts were thus established. These kept the Indians from uniting in attack. Moreover there was a row in the Modoc camp, and Hooker Jim with twelve warriors, including the murderers, left Captain Jack — thereby bringing about their undoing, but ultimately saving their necks. The party under Jim was discovered and their trail followed, until they were scattered and broken; finally, starving and dispirited, they came in and laid down their arms.

As fine a lot of rascals as ever gained immunity from the rope made themselves safe when, on May 22, Hooker Jim, Bogus Charley, Shacknasty Jim, and Steamboat Frank offered to go into the Lava-Beds and bring Captain Jack in. It was claimed afterwards that they were not promised immunity for undertaking this service, and the interpreter was blamed, but they saved their necks, though they did not bring Jack in. The next morning Jack was surprised, Boston Charlie surrendered, and Princess Mary, Jack's sister, and seven other women were captured. Jack and his men got away through a crevice. The next day five more warriors surrendered, and Dr. Cabanisse went to talk to Jack. He talked, but Jack stayed out, though Schonchin and Scarfaced Charlie came in. On June 1 a squadron of the First Cavalry caught up with and surrounded Jack, who had only two warriors remaining with him. Then the man ceased fighting and dragged himself into camp.

He uttered no word when he came except the remark, "My legs are no good." Inasmuch as he had been using them to no common purpose for some months, that was not surprising.

With Jack there came in the two remaining warriors and fifteen women and children. The Modoc war was over, but at a frightful cost, considering the petty size of Jack's following. It was said that the chief might have stayed out for years if his people had been content to abide with his leadership.

Captain Jack, Schonchin John, Black Jim, Boston Charlie, One-Eyed Jim, and Slolox were tried by a military commission, charged with murder and assault with intent to kill, in violation of the rules of war, and condemned to death. One-Eyed Jim and Slolox were reprieved and their punishment fixed at imprisonment for life, the others were hanged at Fort Klamath, October 3, 1873. The informers were sent to Quapaw agency and Fort Marion, Florida, with the other Modocs. They have thriven, and a few years ago the redoubtable Bogus Charley had carried his people well along the road to Christianity. The Modocs live to-day in fellowship with their old foes, the Klamaths; and while among them a few years ago, I saw no sign of the ferocious cunning which led these people to the sanguinary defense of the Lava-Beds a generation ago.



SPEARING SALMON ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER
Edward S. Curtis Photo

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CHIEF JOSEPH

MAKAH FISHERMEN IN THE STRAITS OF JUAN DE FUCA
Edward S. Curtis Photo

CHAPTER XIX

THE MASTERLY RETREAT OF JOSEPH AND HIS NEZ PERCES

Forced to leave the Country in which his Fathers died, he conducted a Campaign against Overwhelming Numbers and retreated, Fighting, across Two Territories.

IN the months of June and July, 1900, I spent five weeks in the company of Chief Joseph of the Nez Perces, an Indian who developed, under pressure, military genius that would have made him one of the great captains of all time if his gifts had been cultivated and he had been given a wider field to operate in. As it was, with only the resources that an Indian living in a lean land could muster, he kept an army at bay, fought with front and rear, and forced his way across about fourteen hundred miles of wild country, in spite of the opposition of an active and ably generaled army under General O. O. Howard, from the western border of Idaho, across Idaho and Montana, to within a few miles of the Canadian boundary-line, in the Milk River country, Montana; and was taken only because he supposed he had made good his object and reached British territory. From army officers and Indians I gathered something of the character of the fight made by Joseph; but the story as I got it from the lips of the old chief himself, during a trip down through Washington, Idaho, and Oregon, traversing the country in the fastnesses of which Joseph's people had lived for generations and much of which was for him full of reminiscence, was a striking narrative, if indeed that could be called a narrative which was fragmentary and told a bit at a time.

I had been ordered to Colville reservation, in Washington, to make inquiry into the practicability of removing Joseph and his people, who had been living on the Colville reservation since, decimated by disease, they were returned to the northwest from exile in the Indian Territory. Joseph had fought the army of the United States, when he left Idaho in 1877, because he was not allowed to return to the Wallowa Valley in northeastern Oregon. My experience of the man during our five weeks' close companionship on a trip authorized by the government, gave me the idea that he was making a determined effort to be allowed to return to the Wallowa Valley for the sole purpose of keeping the prestige he was losing — or rather hoping thus to regain that which he had lost. I may have been in error in this, for the deeds of his earlier life, his utterances in council, the persistence with which he disdainfully declined a home on the Lapwai reservation, Idaho, and demanded that he be allowed to live in the Wallowa Valley, showed that the man had in him a strong love for the soil. He said in council on one occasion, "A man who would not love the ground which holds the bones of his father and mother is worse than a beast." Whatever his object, late in life there could be no doubt that he sincerely longed for a home in the valley in which he had spent his youth, and that he was sadly disappointed when it became apparent that his people did not desire that which his heart longed for. The removal could not be effected.

The Wallowa Valley, which was described as a desert place when Joseph asked to live in it, in the early seventies, now blooms as the rose; it is covered with fruit-farms, contains four thriving towns, Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise, and Joseph, — Enterprise being the county seat of Wallowa County, Oregon; and the valley is a veritable garden. It was out of the question that the government should purchase enough of this valley to make a home for Joseph and his band — though there is grave doubt whether the title to the land ever passed out of the hands of Joseph and his people by any binding treaty. It is enough that the white man has turned the desert into a garden, that he should enjoy the profit of his enterprise.

Of the history of the treaty-making which led to the Nez Perces war of 1877 — the only war the Nez Perces ever engaged in with the whites, by the way — I gained much from talking with old Joseph, and I was already familiar with a great deal of it. And this much I knew — and was the more sympathetic in considering the complaints of the old chief because of it: the Nez Perces were long suffering; they killed no whites until they went on the war-path to prevent their forcible removal to the land appointed for their residence by a government commission in 1876; they committed few outrages during the brief and brilliant campaign when General Howard chased them approximately fourteen hundred miles and into the arms of General Nelson A. Miles; and the character of Joseph was directly the opposite of that of Sitting Bull, who was as stolid and stubborn as Joseph was amenable and pliant when properly handled.

Joseph was the son of Old Joseph, chief of the Lower Nez Perces. The tribe was divided into many bands, and Old Joseph was one of many chiefs, and the wisest of his generation. "The Thunder-Traveling-over-the-Mountains" was the sonorous title enjoyed by the young Joseph, until, by the death of his father, he attained to the chieftaincy of his people. Old Joseph was a party to the treaty of 1855, made by Governor Isaac I. Stevens, in which the whole tribe joined in the sale of a part of their lands to the government. Old Joseph always maintained that he had no idea of selling at any time the land of his people in the Wallowa Valley. But it is certain that the other chiefs of his nation conveyed by treaty in 1863 all their land, except that contained in the Lapwai reservation; and as Old Joseph had joined them in the original tribal treaty, it was held that he had given an implied consent to be ruled by what the whole tribe did. Young Joseph said of the deal: —

"It was as though I had some horses and a white man came and offered me a price for them. I told him I did not wish to sell, and he went to a neighbor of mine and said, 'Joseph has horses and I want to buy them,' and the neighbor had made the price, sold the horses, and the white man had then come to me and said, 'I have bought your horses; give them to me.'"

The Upper Nez Perces sold the land and the white men went into the Wallowa Valley and took claims. For years there was argument and contention about it. Old Joseph never acquiesced in the sale, though it was said that his name was affixed to the treaty; and young Joseph, acting on the dying words of his father, declined to live elsewhere than in the valley that had been the home of his fathers. It is certain that Joseph and his people had the sympathy of those who were best acquainted with the merits of their contention. Even General Howard and the other military men, who were kept at their wit's ends to keep the younger Joseph in the reservation that had been appointed to him at Lapwai, said that he was right, in the main. That the government had some idea of restoring Joseph and the Lower Nez Perces to their home in the Wallowa was shown by the fact that in 1875 a commission was appointed to appraise the value of the improvements made by settlers, and a bill was introduced in Congress that year to appropriate the necessary money to compensate the settlers, something like sixty-seven thousand dollars, but for some inscrutable reason it did not pass, though Indians, settlers, and commissioners were all in favor of it. It was another of the blunders of which those times were so fruitful, and which were to bear other fruit in the midst of bloody fields ere long. And there were many councils in which Joseph took a part, and his voice was always for peace. General Howard, who was in command of the Department of the Columbia at the time, reported Joseph as having said at the last council: "I would rather give up my country than have war. I will give up my father's grave, but I will not shed the blood of a white man." That day Too-Hul-Hul-Sute, the chief of a band and the "Dreamer-Drummer" priest of a peculiar sect of spiritualists, whose belief was very like that of the ghost-dancers of later days, was put under arrest for saying in council that he would not go to the reservation at Lapwai, the other Indians might do as they liked. At this council there were present several bands, including that of Joseph, White Bird, Too-Hul-Hul-Sute, Hush-Hush-Cute, which comprised a number of smaller bands, and the band of Looking Glass, who is said to have been the active soldier and executive of Chief Joseph in the campaign that was soon to open. Looking Glass was good to Joseph while he lived; but when he was killed, Joseph honored his memory by taking to wife his two widows — they were with the old chief at Nespelim, on the Colville reservation, when I visited there.

May 14, 1877, it was that General Howard met Joseph in council for the last time, and Joseph made his last peace-talk to the whites. It ended by General Howard giving Joseph and the Lower Nez Perces thirty days in which to move on to the reservation that was set apart for them. The Indians were told that if they did not move in the appointed time, the soldiers would remove them.

At that time there was no open talk of war, but an army officer, who was an observer of the Nez Perces, said of them that they performed cavalry tactics with perfect accuracy, and as though they had been thoroughly drilled. He was laughed at, and a few weeks later those same tactics, and some more to the point, were practiced by the Indians in actual warfare. Chief Joseph may not have been responsible for this drilling, but when he, as leader, came to take command of the warriors, he found that Looking Glass had a well-disciplined soldiery in the peace-loving people. Councils were held among the bands, and in these Joseph says he took no part, other than to urge peace. But he was the most influential of the Indians, and they went to war. Perhaps his peaceable inclination was born in later days, but certain it is that the chiefs were for war and determined to resist the soldiery when the troops came.

Some of the chiefs were for attacking the settlers. Joseph opposed this, saying that the settlers were men of peace. The others pointed to the fact that it was the settlers who had killed Joseph's brother; it was settlers who killed another Indian; settlers headed by Harry Mason had whipped two Indians; and, lastly, it was settlers who ran off a band of their horses even after they had been notified to make ready to move. The Indians kept on drilling for the full limit of the thirty days, and they held nightly councils at Rocky Cañon. Then there was an outbreak.

The morning of the day upon which they expected the soldiers to come, they killed an old man named Devine on the Salmon River. There were only three Indians concerned in the killing, and these same three killed three men the next day and drove their stock off to Camas Prairie, where the main body was encamped, and urged their fellows to the war-path. Joseph and his brother, Ollacutt, were not with the other Indians in the camp; Joseph's wife was sick and the brothers were with her. White Bird, who was a chief of importance, declared for war, and that night there were ten white men killed on the Salmon River on the road between Mt. Idaho and Fort Lapwai. Then it was, when war was inevitable, that Joseph took command of his people and led them over to White Bird Cañon, and made them ready to meet the soldiers.

It was on a day in June, twenty-three years later, a lovely day, and we were on a frightful mountain trail leading down to and overlooking the Grand Ronde River in northeastern Oregon, that Joseph told me this part of his story. The trail was at once so narrow and so precipitous that, meeting another team coming up the trail, we, having but a light vehicle, stopped, took the buggy apart to let the other pass, and rested. The chief was very near to fighting his battles over again that day. His protestations of peaceful intention disappeared, as he warmed to his story and told of the beginning of the campaign.

"I had two hundred and forty fighting men at first," said the old chief, "but Looking Glass came in afterwards with more. I knew that there would be much fighting, for I had talked to my people, and it was settled that we would go to the buffalo country over to the east. I told my people that they must not fight with settlers, but wait for the soldiers, and our scouts told us that the soldiers would soon come after us. They did n't think that the Nez Perces would stand against the troops. I found that our young men had been making ready for the trouble, and so had the other chiefs, and we had many guns and much ammunition — we had more before the fighting was over," the old man added grimly. "Until the first fight had been fought and the victory had been given to the Nez Perces, I did not think that we would go farther than the buffalo grounds. After the fight, I knew that I would have to lead my people to the country where Sitting Bull had found a refuge when pursued."

I asked Joseph if he knew at the time what lay between him and Canada, and he waved his arm over to the east. "We knew that the distance was great, but it is easier to travel and fight than to die. Our young men were not afraid, and they knew the Indian and the white man's way of fighting."

I asked him where he got his knowledge of military tactics, and he replied that he had no such knowledge, — that his people had seen the cavalry drill and they could manœuvre as the white troops did in time of peace. "The Great Spirit puts it in the heart and head of man to know how to defend himself." In this way he accounted for the fact that he employed every obstructive and offensive device known in the art of war; and if instinct led him to a knowledge of how to threw up defensive works as he did to obstruct the attack of Howard and Gibbon, it was very fortunate that his instinct had not been cultivated.

And this is the story I gathered from him. He did not give the designations of the troops involved, but in every engagement he knew very accurately the number opposed to him, and there was never any doubt in his mind about the strength of the force he had to cope with at every stage of his progressive flight, until he made his last stand.

Colonel Perry had been sent down from Fort Lapwai to chastise the marauding Nez Perces. With the fatuous ignorance that characterized the opening of most of our Indian wars, the force under Perry was absurdly inadequate to the task given it. It was supposed that the mere show of military strength would send the Nez Perces scurrying to their burrows on the reservation. Joseph waited calmly for the attack, and early in the morning of June 17 he lay in the White Bird Cañon, watching the approach of Perry and his force, riding down the broad trail into the cañon, for the purpose of surprising the Indians. The Indians wanted to move across the Salmon River and get away, but Joseph asserted his authority and said the fight must be fought there, and he ambushed a number of mounted Indians to strike the command after it had passed, while the rest of the fighting force was hidden across the trail. There was not an Indian in sight, and the troops were moving easily down on the distant village, when every tree and rock suddenly became alive, and the valley blazed with a fire of guns that threw the troops into confusion. Many men fell, and the order was given to retreat to the ridge that had been passed. Then it was that the Indians in ambush arose and struck the command on the flank. The retreat became a rout; but when the troops escaped from the cañon they were put into some sort of order. They got away at a gallop, and Joseph pursued them up to within four miles of Mt. Idaho.

General Howard woke up to the situation and at once understood that the peaceable Nez Perces had turned into a military organization that it would take a force to control; but it required some time to get men on the ground. Joseph kept changing that ground, and there were many small engagements, in which the Indians invariably had the advantage, except in an attack made on the band of Looking Glass, who had not yet joined Joseph. It was proposed to arrest Looking Glass, for it was known that he was a capable man and would be an able lieutenant to Joseph. Looking Glass waited too long before breaking camp and was surprised by a considerable force, his own people being greatly outnumbered. Here he showed his generalship, for he got away with all of his people and camp impedimenta, though compelled to abandon seven hundred ponies. He joined forces with Joseph, and they moved out to the east and south. On the Mt. Idaho road, they attacked a command of regulars, and killed many of the soldiers. Joseph said that this detachment was in his way and that he had to disperse them to get through. He knew by this time that General Howard was organizing a force, and he proposed to make his stand for an engagement with a superior force where he would have the choice of ground. He made for the Clearwater, moving with great rapidity across the Lapwai reservation, and by the time Howard was ready to strike him, he had his lodges set up beyond the stream and was in position. The battle that ensued showed the mettle of the Indians and the capacity of their leader.

General Howard, who had four hundred men, two gatlings, and a howitzer, advanced in formation for a pitched battle and left his supply-train practically unguarded in the rear. Joseph knew instinctively that the commissary was the important feature of the white man's campaign, and he sent a considerable portion of his force to attack and destroy the train. The movement was unsuccessful, because Howard discovered it in time and sent back a force to protect the commissary. The diversion helped the Indians, for they had force enough to protect their position, as Joseph thought. All the afternoon of July 11 the battle raged, the troops and Indians both throwing up works, from which the fighting was continued during the night, and no progress was made during the next day, until Howard was reinforced by a considerable number of cavalry, when, with artillery and cavalry, an attack was made on the left of the position of the Indians. Joseph fought for a few minutes against the attack, but knowing that he could do nothing in a hand-to-hand encounter, he fled. The artillery was so close in, that it commanded the Indian village across the river, and it was abandoned, practically, though the Indian women were already making off with a great share of the equipage and the ponies. Joseph formed his men again and returned, with a show of force, to intercept the soldiers, who were following the fugitives fast; he stopped the troops and engaged them long enough to give the fleeing people a good start, then gave up fighting and scurried after them at a pace that defied pursuit. Howard had won the battle, but with a very considerable loss. The Indian loss was trifling, and Joseph was on his way to the east.

The next morning Howard continued his pursuit. Joseph picked out a spot for an ambuscade, set his rear-guard to protect the retreat, and pushed the main-body of his people on to the fastnesses of the Lolo trail. The advance of Howard's force fell into the ambuscade, and the whole column was thrown into confusion and halted. Before night Joseph was safe for the time, in a position that he might have held indefinitely against an equal force. He knew that no one could pass him on the Lolo trail, which crosses the Bitter Root Mountains, and Howard knew it too. The general made a feint of sending a part of his command back to Lapwai, intending to make a forced march by a détour and come in at the rear of Joseph. Joseph did not wait for the trap to spring. He decamped, and when the soldiers struck the trail fifteen miles behind where Joseph should have been, that astute warrior had passed the junction-point and was making his way over into the valley of the Bitter Root. Howard could do nothing but follow him and telegraph word to the posts in Montana that Joseph was coming.

Freed from much of their camp equipment, but with plenty of ponies and supplies, the Indians moved with incredible rapidity, and Joseph was in the midst of the settlements of the Lolo River, while he was supposed to be still in the mountains.

Here he gave evidence that he only wanted to make good his flight, for he made no attempt to molest the settlers. A fort had been built some distance ahead on the trail, and Looking Glass was sent to interview the people occupying it. He told them that the Indians did not want to molest them, but simply to pass unhindered. The volunteers told them to go on. In two towns, Stevensville and Corwallis, the Nez Perces actually stopped and traded with the whites, leaving in plenty of time to keep well ahead of Howard, who was coming up.

The telegraph, which brought about the downfall of Joseph in the end, had been busy, and troops were moving to intercept him. He knew nothing of the telegraph, but his instinct told him that he must not loiter. General Gibbon was riding as fast as his teams could carry him, across from Fort Shaw to Fort Missoula on the Bitter Root, to cut off the flight of the Indians. He had one hundred and ninety infantrymen in wagons, and hoped, at least, to stay the fugitives until Howard came up. Joseph knew what he might expect, and he got to and passed the Bitter Root before Gibbon arrived, but Gibbon continued in pursuit.

Joseph had turned to the south, but it was only for the purpose of getting into a country where he might utilize his force to greater advantage, for he knew that he could not go through directly to his objective point on the Canadian boundary. He went up the Bitter Root Valley, looking out for Howard, but paying no attention to Gibbon, not knowing that the latter was on his trail; and he was resting in the Big Hole Valley when Gibbon came up with him.

General Gibbon had moved swiftly, and his pursuit was masked. Joseph admitted at the end that he was surprised in the Big Hole, but he came out of it very well.

In the morning of August 8 the Indians of Joseph's band were aroused by the presence of the soldiers in their very midst. The troops dashed right through the camp, but the Indians with marvelous facility got away in every direction, took to the ravines, allowed the soldiers to take the camp, formed into some sort of order, and while the troops were still flushed with the success of the surprise, Joseph drove down on them with his whole force. He retook the camp and forced the troops to withdraw to the protection of the timber. Again there was a battle that lasted during the day. Joseph threw up earthworks and advanced his men under cover. Repeatedly he stormed the position of Gibbon; he even captured a howitzer, and if his people could have served the gun his victory might have been more complete than it was. Near midnight the Indians had fought Gibbon's command to a standstill, in spite of the most determined bravery and defense of the troops. The chief could not capture the command, but he took everything movable, including many of the horses, and vanished. Twelve hours later Howard arrived, too late to change the disastrous outcome of the fight, in which Gibbon was badly wounded. Many white men had fallen, and the Indian loss was comparatively heavy, especially in view of the fact that Looking Glass, the diplomat, but not the ablest of Joseph's lieutenants of that name, lay dead on the field to be scalped by the Bannock scouts belonging to Howard's party. A great number of men and women were among the dead left by the Indians on the field, the surprise being complete, so far as they were concerned.

During ten days Joseph moved leisurely. Still looking for a pass through which he might run the gauntlet to the north and east, he crossed into Idaho again and came into Camas Prairie with his stock refreshed — and replenished to the extent of about three hundred head taken from the whites. His people were rested, but he knew that fighting must begin again, for Howard, relentless in his pursuit, was but one day behind him. Joseph told me that he had expected to be attacked by the Montana militia when he was struck by Gibbon, for he thought he had shaken Howard off. He was surprised to find Howard so close, and did not know that the general was in command when he made a bold attempt to cut out the stock belonging to the troops following after he had started east in Montana. He turned back in the night, sent in scouts to cut the hobbles of the leaders of the herd, then rode down on the herd before the pickets knew what was happening. The horses were grazing wide, it being thought quite out of the question that Joseph should have the temerity to make an attack on a foe that contemplated surprising him in good time. Whooping like fiends, the Indians went at the horses, and before any more men than the pickets on herd duty got into an encounter, the Nez Perces were off again to the shadowy east, out of which they had come, and with them all of the horses of the command, except about enough to mount three troops of cavalry. These went at once in pursuit and picked up stragglers to the number of a few score, but gave over the pursuit with morning.

Joseph had been informed that a detachment had been sent by Howard to occupy Tacher's Pass, through which he proposed to go to make his way into the Yellowstone Park; and he moved his main body ahead to reach the pass, while a body of raiders went back in pursuit of the cavalry, who had retaken some of the horses. Part of the recaptured mounts they captured again, then made off for the mountains, reached the pass before Lieutenant Bacon and his command, and got clear away into the National Park, leaving Howard to sit down and wait for fresh mounts and supplies. It was exasperating work for Howard, but the Nez Perces, though they had lost many men and women, were enjoying it, and Joseph, who was a very vain man, had come to know that he was performing a military feat that would make him famous.

As evidence of his attitude toward the non-combatant whites at this time, Joseph told me how he had captured three men and two women in the Park and had set them at liberty, unharmed, after holding them for three days. This must have been the Cowan party, of which three men were killed in the Indian attack. As a matter of fact, Joseph did restrain his Indians and none of the captives were ill-treated.

Colonel Sturgis with the Seventh Cavalry had been sent out to intercept Joseph, but the chief got wind of the movement. He went leisurely down to the Yellowstone, crossed that river, and started in the direction of Stinking River, a feint which cost Sturgis much time, for, instead of going on, Joseph changed his course, went down to Clark's Fork, and on to the Yellowstone again. Sturgis, with three hundred and fifty men, was by this time on the trail, and he caught up with Joseph in the wild and arid country across the Yellowstone. The country was much broken, a sage-brush plain split up by deep ravines. On September 13, Joseph stopped to give battle and engaged the troops with his rear-guard. It was a most exasperating thing for Sturgis to see the main body of the enemy slip away while he was engaged with the wild riders of the Nez Perces rear, and he sent a detachment under Captain Benteen to cut off the Indian main body, which was making for Cannon Greek. This detachment caught up with the herds and cut off a bunch of ponies, but could not get close to the Indians before they reached the creek, where they made a stand by occupying the natural defenses while the women and ponies were being hurried through the cañon. Sturgis fought through the day, but had made little headway beyond forcing the Nez Perces to retire down the cañon, and he withdrew his men and went into camp at the entrance to the cañon. The Indians were too much exhausted to press forward, and in the morning the friendly Crows, who were with Sturgis, cut out a great herd of their stock. But they were still well mounted and kept ahead of Sturgis, who could not get near enough to do any effective fighting. The cavalry was distanced in the flight along the Musselshell River and around the Judith Mountains, and, having shaken off his foe, Joseph reached the Missouri River September 23. The distances covered were tremendous, and there had been hard fighting, but the Nez Perces were within reach of the goal, as Joseph thought. Joseph attacked a little fort at the mouth of Cow Creek on the Missouri, but did not press the attack, and had a skirmish with a small force under Major Ilges, who had moved from Fort Benton to engage with the Nez Perces. Moving to the north, Joseph went on leisurely, thinking he had lost his pursuers and that he had plenty of time to get across the line and reach Sitting Bull's place of refuge. He went into camp with a view to remaining some time on Snake Creek, near the Bear Paw Mountains, and prepared to rest. He thought he was safe across the Canadian line. As a matter of fact, he was thirty miles south of the boundary.

This mistake cost him dearly, and he almost wept when he told me of his feelings when he was again attacked.

The story of his last fight Joseph told me at Lewiston, Idado, where we remained a day upon our return trip from his old home at Wallowa. We had had a long, wearisome journey by team conveyance, and felt that we needed a day's rest; and it was after we had crossed the Snake River, with his good-humor restored, that I led him back to his story.

Colonel (now General) Nelson A. Miles, retired, was destined to wear the laurels that General Howard had pursued for so many weary miles. Howard was still far away, and Joseph safe enough from his pursuit, if the chief had kept on a few miles farther before going into camp. Miles was at Fort Keogh, on the Yellowstone, when he was ordered to head off Joseph. His equipment was equal to the task of coping with Joseph at his best, and at this time the Nez Perces force was dreadfully reduced by death and wounds. Miles's command consisted of cavalry and mounted infantry, with a force of scouts, and a couple of guns. He made a rapid march to Carroll, got a trace of Joseph, — which was plain enough, for his trail was over the whole country, — and left Carroll for the Bear Paw Mountains, where Joseph was even then.

"I sat down," said Joseph, "in a fat and beautiful country. I had won my freedom and the freedom of my people. There were many empty places in the lodges and in the council, but we were in the land where we would not be forced to live in a place we did not want. I believed that if I could remain safe at a distance and talk straight to the men that would be sent by the Great Father, I could get back the Wallowa Valley and return in peace. That is why I did not allow my young men to kill and destroy the white settlers after I began to fight. I wanted to leave a clean trail, and if there were dead soldiers in that trail I could not be held to blame. I had sent out runners to find Sitting Bull, to tell him that another band of red men had been forced to run from the soldiers of the Great Father, and to propose that we join forces if we were attacked. My people were recovering their health and the wounded were getting better of their hurts. I was ready to move on and seek out a permanent camp when, one morning, Bear Coat and his soldiers came in sight and stampeded our horses, and I knew that I had made a mistake by not crossing into the country of the Red Coats, also in not keeping the country scouted in my rear."

On the sixth day after leaving Carroll, Miles came upon the camp of the Nez Perces. His scouts had brought in the news of the find two days previously. No rear-guard was maintained by Joseph, and Miles intended to surprise the Indians, by making the attack early in the morning. The approach to the camp was uncovered, but the Indians saw the soldiers coming in time to get to cover in the hills and ravines. The pony herd, which was grazing some distance from the camp, was cut off in the first attack and captured, but the Indians, having reached cover, poured such a deadly fire into the ranks of the troopers that they withdrew, after losing a great number of their men, and invested the position occupied by the Nez Perces. Joseph told me that he could have escaped easily enough by leaving the wounded, the infirm, and the children, but he thought he could make terms with Miles, — in case Sitting Bull, to whom he had sent urgent messages, did not come to his aid. For four days the fighting went on, Miles being joined by Howard and his staff after he had the situation well in hand; and on the fifth day Howard sat by and saw Chief Joseph surrender himself into the hands of his subordinate.

There is no doubt — indeed, the fact has never been questioned — that Colonel Miles accepted the surrender of Joseph on honorable terms. That officer assured Joseph that he would be sent back to his reservation in the spring. Miles thought the promise would be carried out; so did Howard. Miles made the same offer to White Bird, who had escaped with something over one hundred people just before the surrender, and who was safe in British territory. With this understanding, Chief Joseph brought in the people who had survived the fearful march and tremendous fighting, numbering four hundred and thirty-one men, women, and children — White Bird had taken many fighting men with him when he escaped. The Nez Perces were sent to Indian Territory instead of being sent home, and were not transferred to the Colville reservation, where they now live, for many years. Then they were broken and decimated in numbers.

The epic of Joseph's retreat has not yet been written, though some of the men concerned in it have written of the affair from the point of view of personal experience. The magnificent distances covered by the red and the white men in that campaign have seldom been paralleled in warfare, and it is as well that the personal and official record of the flight and pursuit has been chronicled by General Howard, else it might be regarded a few years hence as a romance of those days in the Far West which are no more. From the beginning of the pursuit across the Lolo trail to the embarkation of Howard's command for the return journey (July 27 to October 10), seventy-five days elapsed, and the exact distance covered by the troops is recorded as 1321 miles. It is certain that Joseph traveled a greater distance, for he frequently doubled on his trail to throw off his pursuers; and he carried with him his women, children, and horses. It was a marvelous performance, looked at from the point of view either of the pursued or of the pursuing.

As I made very accurate notes of the statements made by men concerned in the flight and wholly familiar with the circumstances, it is as well that some disputed matters should be set at rest here. It has been assumed that there was only one Looking Glass with Joseph. As a matter of fact there were two of that name. One was a warrior, the other a diplomat, and both of chiefly rank. Edward Raboin, of Lapwai, Idaho, was with me as interpreter when I made the trip with Joseph in 1900, and I had the story from him; the Reverend Mark Arthur, a Nez Perce full-blood, and an ordained Presbyterian minister, together with Judge James of the Indian police court at Fort Lapwai, cleared up to my satisfaction some points in dispute. Raboin knew all of the Nez Perces, and the Reverend Mr. Arthur, who was a lad of about ten years at the time of the trouble, was with Joseph throughout the flight, escaping to Canada after the surrender to Miles. They all three agreed that Rainbow, who was also sometimes called Looking Glass, together with Five Wounds, both very prominent Indians, were killed at the Big Hole battle, and that Looking Glass, the great leader, and Ollicutt — Joseph's younger brother — were both killed at Bear Paw by Miles's command. Mr. Arthur declared to me that he saw all these men killed and that there could be no mistake about it, and in this he was fully corroborated by the others. Mr. Arthur said that Looking Glass made a desperate attempt to escape after Joseph's surrender and was literally shot to pieces by the soldiers. White Bird, who was also prominent in the Joseph camp, escaped to Canada and lived there until his death, a few years ago.

Joseph went with me down into the country where the grave of his father was made. He found, instead of the desert that surrounded him in his youth, a rich and bountiful country. He scarcely recognized the Wallowa Valley, but we found the grave of Old Joseph, his father. A white man who owned the ground in which the old man's bones were interred, with a spirit too rare among his kind, had the plat enclosed and kept the grave in such condition that the heart of Joseph, who was with me, was melted, and he wept. It would have been an impossibility to replace the band of Joseph in their old home. Towns and villages stood where the pony-herds of the Nez Perces were wont to graze on the scant grass; orchards grew where the sage-brush had been, and Joseph knew not his old home.

I took the old man back to the Colville reservation. His people had no desire to follow him. His glories had been forgotten and a new chief reigned "who knew not Joseph." The old man died on September 21, 1904, and his death recalled for a day the accomplishments of the red-skinned general who had made one of the greatest campaigns in the history of the world's wars.

The Historical Society of the State of Washington erected a monument to Joseph's memory at his grave at Nespelim, Washington, up the Nespelim River about six miles from its confluence with the Columbia River, which monument is said to have been paid for by Mr. Samuel Hill, son-in-law of James J. Hill, the railroad magnate, but erected by the state of Washington, in name, to give it historical prominence. The monument was dedicated on June 20, 1905, in the presence of Joseph's band of Nez Perces, Captain John McA. Webster, U. S. A., retired, agent of the Colville reservation, and a large concourse of prominent white persons, residents of the states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Since writing the foregoing I have been over the Bear Paw battle-field and was greatly impressed by its striking testimony to the tremendous military capacity of Chief Joseph. And I was even more profoundly impressed by the corroboration in detail given to the story of Joseph by the indestructible evidence of the topography of the battle-ground. That the event should have been retained with great fidelity in the mind of the old man, I expected, for these children of nature have faithful and accurate memories. But Joseph had taken for granted many things which were not revealed to me until I went over the scene of the battle. The old warrior had assumed that I would know that he had fought the white soldiers with skill and sagacity such as might have been demonstrated by a man versed in the military science. I did know that he had displayed tremendous resources, but I could not know that he had put aside the cunning of his kind and had met the white men with such a defense as General Miles himself, or General Howard, might have resorted to had either of them been in charge of the Nez Perce defense.

The battle-field lies on Snake Creek, Montana, about thirty miles southwest of the Fort Belknap agency. In the calm of an October day, 1907, I went over the ground which attained such bloody fame thirty years previously, and which, in its principal features, is unchanged. The topography and general aspect of the field, excepting the slight changes brought about by the work of the husbandmen, doubtless present the same appearance as on the eve of this historical conflict, September 30, 1877. But my eye missed the Indian camp; there were no serried ranks of bluecoats. With old Joseph's story in my mind, however, I had no difficulty in following the details of the fight. With me were Major W. R. Logan, of the Fort Belknap agency, William Bent, who was a scout with General Miles at the time of the fight, and Bernard Striker, a Gros Ventre mixed-blood who knew the field well. The visit was full of melancholy interest for Major Logan, for his father, Captain Logan, Seventh Infantry U. S. A., was killed at the Big Hole battle with the Nez Perces.

The location of the Indian camp at the time it was surprised by Miles's command was as distinctly marked as are the ancient remains of the fortified encampments left as evidences of the Roman occupation of Britain. Joseph had intrenched himself with speed, skill, and sagacity, such as is altogether inconceivable to one knowing Indian methods of fighting and Indian characteristics. It is difficult to believe that the site for the camp and its entrenchment was selected by a man knowing nothing of military science according to the schools. All along that front of the camp which was exposed to attack, rifle-pits were constructed and fought with courage and skill. As Joseph was surprised, these pits must have been dug after the attack in which Miles cut off the herd; at least their construction must have been completed after the first attack. The fact that the first attack, which was made in strength and in the evident expectation of forcing the defense at the first blow, was repulsed with such bloody results that twenty-three soldiers were killed by the Indians on their first charge, indicates that Joseph's fighting men were under cover. The valiant work of Sergeant Martin, of D Troop, Seventh Cavalry, who was killed within the Indian lines, and of other heroes whose names have not been recalled, was wholly ineffective in the face of the withering fire that was directed at the troopers from the rifle-pits. Joseph was fighting under conditions wholly new to the troops; it was almost unheard of that Indians should entrench themselves in artificial coverts, and the consequences were fatal to the troops.

The rifle-pits, which still remain as clearly marked as on the day of the fight, except that grass has grown over the ground, were calculated with great skill. They were dug separately, but connected by underground passages, so that, without exposing themselves, the Indians could move about from one pit to another. The meagreness of the tools with which this work was done — for the digging was accomplished by means of knives, and shovels made of frying-pans with sharpened edges — made it a task of great labor. But the ingenious character of these defenses accounts for the resistance which was carried on for four days against a force that was immensely superior to that of Joseph in point of numbers and equipment. I could easily imagine the astonishment of the troops at being foiled by a defense which could not have been looked for in a position so feebly manned, though chosen with due regard for the military advantages which Joseph never overlooked.

The rifle-pits stretch across that front of the Indian camp from which an attack must come,—the natural condition being utilized for protection from other quarters; and I could not help wondering what the result would have been if Sitting Bull and his people, who were encamped in the British possessions about one hundred and fifty miles north from Joseph's camp, had been brought to the assistance of Joseph before the troops attacked. Of course, the ultimate conclusion must have been the same; but if that fortified and entrenched position on Snake Creek had been held by anything like the force which Joseph had with him when he began his retreat, the victory of the whites must have been won at a fearful cost.

With its melancholy evidences of the days that were fraught with terror on the border, the battlefield is wholly neglected. It presents no other proof of the fact that it was the scene of one of the decisive battles of the Indian wars, except the disturbed face of the ground where the rifle-pits were dug, and a yawning trench, some thirty feet long and six feet wide, where the fallen soldiers were hastily buried, but which now is vacant, the bodies having been removed and reinterred at Fort Assinniboine. The pits and the trench are being obliterated by the efforts of nature to cover with a veil of sward these souvenirs of the bloody past on the frontier. In a few years the roller of time will have utterly removed even these evidences of the past, and this notable field, with its mute testimony to the bravery of the men who made easy the way of the pioneer of civilization, and to the skill and courage of the red men in defending themselves against the inevitable, will be as other scenes of agricultural peace and prosperity. It seemed to me that the great nation, which had found the means to inspire the men of General Miles's command with the heroism which was displayed in the conquering of Joseph, might well be at the cost of erecting some enduring acknowledgment of the fact that here was fought one of the bloodiest and most desperate of those many fights by means of which the land of the red man was made the possible habitation of the paleface, who is now established in his inheritance.

CHAPTER XX

THE UNWHIPPED UTES

How the White River Utes left the Uintah Reservation, Utah, and defied the State of Wyoming and the Federal Authorities — The Effect of Diplomacy.

WHILE my function as an official of the government dealing with Indians has had to do with diplomacy rather than with force, I am free to admit that sternly repressive methods have generally been effectual in teaching the Indian that he must behave himself. For, child as he is, the Indian has an appreciative sense of justice when it is administered without weakness on the one hand or a show of ill-temper on the other. His sense of *meum* and *tuum* is not as sharply defined as it might be, in all cases; but, since he has come to an appreciation of the fact that the white man is his superior in strength and intelligence, he has held himself in restraint to a degree not to be understood by men who knew the red man of a generation ago.

All of which is preliminary to the statement of my opinion that the Indians who have not felt the heavy hand of retribution for crimes against the whites have escaped a very essential part of their training in civilization. I say it with no bitterness toward the people themselves, but I feel certain that if the Utes had been thoroughly chastised after the Meeker massacre in 1879, they would not be the irresponsible, shiftless, and defiant people they are to-day. They had citizenship thrust upon them without any knowledge of its responsibilities. They escaped retributive justice at a period of their tribal existence when the sense of their ill-doings was strong upon them, and they are the worse for it. Among my aboriginal friends, I have found that those who were taught to respect the whites on the field of battle have been most amenable to the white man's reasoning when he reasoned for their good according to the lights of latter days.

What will very likely prove to be the last serious defiance of the laws which the white man has imposed upon the Indian for his own good and for the peace and comfort of his neighbors, engaged the attention of the government in a most exasperating, though practically bloodless, campaign in pursuit of a band of Utes in the fall of 1906. For many weeks the settlers of a part of Wyoming were kept in a state of alarm that sometimes approached the panic stage by this little body of Indians, numbering not more than four hundred, of whom but a fraction were male adults. It would not be fair to say that the Indians were more than unruly, nor would it state the case to say that the state of Wyoming was terrorized; but the Indians were roaming through a section that was comparatively sparsely settled, and their attitude caused great concern among the isolated ranchmen, through whose country they progressed with an utter disregard of the fact that they were generally trespassing upon the property of others. They might have been checked by the state authorities, — there is no doubt of that, — but there was evidently some doubt in the minds of the local officials as to how the wanderers should be treated, — as marauding Indians or as citizens of the United States and amenable to the laws of the commonwealth.

They were Utes, largely White Rivers, and they had been practically enfranchised by having lands allotted to them in severalty from which they had come to understand the privileges of citizenship. They were in fact uncivilized Indians, generally, and they had never felt the strong hand of the power that should have corrected the misdoings of some of their people, particularly in the Meeker affair. They had become dissatisfied with their situation on the Uintah reservation in Utah, and simply had gone out as their ancestors had been wont to do for untold centuries, to live as they liked and where they pleased. Distant hills are likely to look very green to the Indian until he has tested their hospitality, and these Utes were looking for hunting-grounds and green pastures. They had never been reconciled to their home in Utah, and their unrest had by no means been soothed by the processes of civilization which had resolved them into citizens and given them allotments. They were unwhipped, rather intractable, and disposed to remain unconscious of responsibilities that appertained to their sovereign rights as citizens. If they had any fixed idea of a destination when they left their reservation, it was probably Pine Ridge agency, South Dakota.

My experience is that most Indians are impressed by the idea that their fellows at other agencies or reservations are much better off than they themselves are; and, in spite of their supposed taciturnity, they are, as a people, much given to sociable visiting. It is possible that some of the older men among the wanderers, with remembrance of the Big Horn Mountains, had an idea of living by the chase in that country. Whatever their original intention, they were wandering about over the grazing lands of the Wyoming ranchmen and offering a constant menace to the peace of mind of the settlers, though they committed no actual depredations. They were living off of their own stock and the game they could kill — for they were not at all restrained by the game laws of the state of Wyoming. They were sullen, too, and the people of the country were alarmed because of the possibility that the Utes might throw off all restraint and indulge their worst passions.

By legislative proceedings, compelled by reasons of state policy or local conditions, the Utes had been made the beneficiaries of an allotment to which they were not treaty parties. Most of them had not gone far enough on the road to civilization to have an adequate knowledge of the fact that the government was proceeding in their ultimate interest in giving them lands in severalty. When the allotment was imposed on them by congressional action they were very largely disposed to disregard it, and it had been my duty to confer with them and bring them to a sense of what would be good for them under the circumstances. These diplomatic advances they had not always received in the best spirit, and it had been found practically impossible to get a proper proportion of them to signify their acceptance of the terms of the allotment. The amount of land allotted to each of the Indians had been cut down to an extent that they would have resented if they had not, in spirit at least, rejected the entire proceeding. They were unwhipped and indisposed to take on the life of the white man in a country that was not promising for agriculture or cattle-raising, naturally, but which was rich in potentialities when it could be brought under irrigation.

My relations with them had been satisfactory personally — at least as satisfactory as the relations of any white official appealing to them against their prejudices could be; and when they left the reservation in midsummer, 1906, and went off looking for greener pastures, it was to be expected that I would be drawn into the case for the purpose of showing them the error of their ways — if the white settlers did not take the matter into their own hands and chastise them. And if the later settlers of the country that the Utes invaded with such beautiful disregard of changed conditions had been of the same sort as the original settlers in that country; if they had been as ready to defend their rights with the strong hand as were the men who knew and had dealt with some of these Indians thirty years ago, there would have been little left for Indian diplomacy. Under the circumstances, it was a case to be handled with some delicacy.

The first official information the Washington authorities had of the state of affairs — except an intimation from Indian Agent Hall that the White Rivers had left the reservation — was in the form of an invitation from the governor of Wyoming to call off their Indians. This looked simple enough to the governor and the people of that state. But the suggestion — which would no doubt have had the immediate effect of sending troops after the marauders had the Utes been agency Indians — put a perplexing problem up to the department. The wanderers were, in effect, citizens of the United States; they were engaged in no offense against the laws of the United States. They undoubtedly were trespassers in the state of Wyoming, and the obvious thing to do with them was to deal with them as other offenders under the state laws would be dealt with, arrest and punish them. This latter proposition was plain enough as a matter of law, but rather different in practice. Here were four hundred Indians, armed for hunting and possibly for something more than that. The civil and military forces of Wyoming could undoubtedly treat with the red people, but, it was evident, only at a very considerable cost in bloodshed. Besides, there was the question of what to do with them if they were captured. Wyoming did not want the job of keeping, in what would be royal style for a starving Indian, a whole band of starving Indians. On the other hand, the federal authorities, having set the Utes up as citizens, had some doubts about the federal right to interfere with those citizens. In the long run the problem was settled in a common-sense way, though there was not any very nice adjustment made of the responsibility of the Indian, the state, and the national government.

I was in Washington on official business in the month of September, 1906, when the question how to deal with these wanderers came to a point where it must be disposed of. An urgent communication from the governor of Wyoming to the Indian Department brought matters to a head, and I received my orders from Acting Secretary of the Interior, Honorable Thomas Ryan, in the following terms, which I quote as indicating the broad range of the commission committed to me.

"DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
"UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE,
"WASHINGTON, *September* 21, 1906.

"JAMES MCLAUGHLIN, Esq.,
"United States Indian Inspector,
"Washington, D. C.

"SIR: —

"Upon receipt of this letter you will proceed at once to Casper, Wyoming, thence to such other points in Wyoming where the Uintah Ute Indians absent from their reservation may be found, and use every endeavor to induce them to return quietly to their reservation. Promptly report by wire the result of your negotiations, with such recommendations as you may think advisable, and wait further instructions.

"Very respectfully,
(*Sd.*) "THOS. RYAN,
"Acting Secretary."

That the department was much concerned in the matter is shown in an official communication to the President of the same date, which I append, and which shows, in brief, the importance of the problem and the attitude of the Acting Secretary: —

"DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
"UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE,
"WASHINGTON, *September* 21, 1906.

"THE PRESIDENT: —

"I submit herewith a copy of a telegram from the Governor of Wyoming, dated August 25, 1906, stating that some three hundred Ute Indians were then camped along the Platt River in that state, and that he feared serious trouble unless this Department would escort them out of Wyoming; also copy of a report of August 27, 1906, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, setting forth the efforts made by the United States Indian Agent in charge of the Uintah Utes to induce the Indians complained of to return to their homes, and stating that, these Indians being citizens of the United States, the case was one for local authorities rather than for this Department; also copy of a letter transmitting this report of the Commissioner to the Governor of Wyoming; also copy of a communication from the Governor of Wyoming under date of the 17th instant, setting forth the serious aspect of the matter, and stating that neither the county nor the state authorities are able to cope with the situation, and urging the necessity of some prompt and appropriate action by this Department.

"These Indians having received allotments of lands under the Act of February 8, 1887 (24 Statutes, 388), are citizens of the United States. It is a matter of legal interpretation whether the Act approved May 8, 1906, amending the Act of 1887, so that citizenship is deferred until the issuance of final patents on the allotments, can be held to affect the status of these Indians given them prior to the passage of this said amendatory Act.

"This Department is powerless in the premises, and entertains considerable doubt whether the troops of the United States may, as suggested by the Governor of Wyoming, be used to arrest these Indians and return them to their homes in Utah. It is feared, however, that action along this line is the only course that will avoid conflicts between the Indians and the residents of Wyoming, resulting in bloodshed in the near future.

"I have just concluded a conference on this subject with Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs Larrabee and Inspector McLaughlin, with result that I have ordered the latter to proceed immediately to the camp of these Indians in Wyoming and persuade them, if possible, to return to their homes. McLaughlin knows these Indians well and has heretofore been remarkably successful in negotiating with them relative to matters of interest to the Government, to which he found them at first stubbornly opposed. I have much confidence that McLaughlin will be successful. In view, however, of his possible failure, I would respectfully suggest that the matter be submitted to the Attorney General, for his opinion whether troops of the United States may be used to arrest and return these Ute Indians to their homes, and, if in his opinion it may be done, a sufficient force be detailed to accomplish the purpose should it become necessary.

"I have replied by wire to Governor Brooks' letter of the 17th instant, as follows: —

"'Your letter seventeenth relative to Ute Indians received. As result of conference with Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Inspector McLaughlin has been ordered to proceed at once to Casper to confer with these Indians in the hope that he may be able to persuade them to return to their homes without the use of troops. Meantime the Department will to-day communicate all the facts to the President and recommend that troops be used if Inspector McLaughlin fails in his mission, if that can be done lawfully.'

"Very respectfully,
(*Sgd.*) "THOS. RYAN,
"Acting Secretary."

I have found that it has been generally so very necessary to give the Indians plenty of time for consideration, that no time must be lost in getting the subject they are to consider before them, and I was at Casper, and, supposedly, within striking distance of the trail of the wanderers, on the 25th of September. I was there joined by a young White River Ute Indian, Henry Johnson, of the Uintah agency, eighteen years of age, as interpreter, and upon inquiry learned that the Indians had left Casper several days prior to our arrival, and when last heard of were on Sage Creek, about thirty-five miles northeast.

In order to get within shorter driving distance of the people, I returned east to Douglas, Wyoming, and started out by livery conveyance with the interpreter and a person named Tracy, who was said to have sufficient knowledge of the country to be an efficient guide. I have hitherto fallen into the hands of guides whose sole stock in trade was a reputation for knowing the uncharted prairie, but this particular guide was a little bit less informed about the country than I myself was — and I had not been in it before.

There was no trail of the Indians, and it became a case of using my sense of what a wandering band might do under given circumstances — when the circumstances were something in the dark. I found a sheep-herder's camp on Box Creek, twenty-eight miles north of Douglas, and, though I got no better acquainted with the possible abiding-place of the Utes, I put my guide into dry dock there and struck out for Dry Creek, thence over to the Dry Fork of the Cheyenne, and finally back to Douglas, after a trip of over one hundred miles, during which I neither saw nor heard anything of my red friends.

Upon returning to Douglas I picked up a rumor that the Indians were in the neighborhood of Fiddleback Ranch, seventy miles or so northeast of Douglas, and that they were thought to be heading for the Black Hills or the Pine Ridge agency. On this information I acted, and proceeded by train, by way of Crawford, Nebraska, to Edgemont, South Dakota, but found nothing like a certain trail. Acting still on the rumor I had heard, I proceeded to Newcastle, Wyoming, and there got some corroboration of the report of their being at the Fiddleback Ranch.

October 2, I set out from Newcastle with a driver named C. D. Johnson, who was also a deputy game-warden — and it was the game laws of Wyoming that were more in danger than any of the other state enactments up to that time, from the Utes. At Fiddleback Ranch, I found the rumor of the presence of the Indians to have been well founded, but they had left there, traveling in a northwesterly direction, five days previous to my arrival. That night I arrived at Half Circle Bar Ranch after sundown, having traveled ninety miles in the two days since leaving Newcastle, and found plenty of signs of Indians in the vicinity, but could learn nothing definite as to where they then were. We remained over night at the Half Circle Bar Ranch, and left at daylight the following morning, traveling north until we struck the trail of the band about ten o'clock A. M., and followed it until about two o'clock that afternoon, when I found them in camp at a small lake at the head of Black Thunder Creek.

They were a sullen lot, though the few I saw of them then treated me courteously enough. What I did not like was the fact that they wanted to avoid meeting me, saying that many of their young men were off hunting and looking for ponies that had strayed. I had met many of them twice before, and they were not personally offensive. They simply declined to go into council, offering the absence of their people as an excuse. They gave no evidence of offering any sort of hospitality — and under the circumstances it would not have been wise to suggest it. There was nothing for it but to urge our tired horses to the trail again, and I found a welcome and cheerful greeting and treatment from W. M. Baird and his wife, at "21" Ranch, about ten miles down Black Thunder Creek from the Indian camp, and the only habitation within twenty miles.

I was compelled to admire the courage and good sense of Mr. and Mrs. Baird in staying by their property. Had they fled, they would possibly have suffered in their property at least. Securing from the ranchman a fresh team, I returned to the Indian camp the following morning and experienced one of those days of which I have had a few in my life, when I felt my personal knowledge of and acquaintance with the Indian might not be of much avail if they were pressed too far, or if the war-spirit was strong in the young men.

I got them assembled in council, but it was hopeless from the first. They stood about, their very attitude proclaiming their indifference to any argument I might have to offer. When you can get an Indian to argue, it is possible to convince him, but he is very like his white brother when he puts his back up and will not talk. When I had made my proposals the three leaders of the Utes, Soccioff, Red Cap, and Appah, made speeches in the order named, in which they derided the government and its invitation to return to their reservation. In reciting the reasons why they would not return, they naturally indulged in that Indian eloquence which has so often gone far to undo the argument of the white man. They sought to inflame their people with desire for the freedom they were then enjoying. They said that their reservation had been opened to the whites, and that the government was quite free to give their allotments to whites as the rest of the reservation had been given to them. As for the speakers and their people, they did not belong to the government and would have nothing to do with it; Washington people had no claim on them and they had nothing to ask for.

Each one closed with the declaration that he would die rather than return to Utah, and Soccioff was independent and defiant to the point of more than hinting at his willingness to make trouble. The council closed without any advantage to the government, except that I had been able to convey to the wavering ones an idea of the long, hard winter that was before them if they stayed out, and the certainty that the government would do nothing for them while they were recalcitrant.

When the council was over, I concluded to proceed in my own way — for I have generally found it better to work with the Indian as an individual than when he is before his people. It was taking a chance, of course, and there was always a prospect that I would be ordered out of camp or get shot in my back from the gun of some truculent young man. I was handicapped by a want of knowledge of the Ute language — my interpreter being a mere boy and being scared to a point where he was worse than useless. Some of the men spoke a little Sioux, and in this tongue, the sign-language, and pigeon-English I brought around that afternoon and the following day sixty-one individuals to my way of thinking, and got them out of the main camp as soon as possible after volunteering to return to their home reservation.

As the men indicated their willingness to return with me to the reservation, I moved them and their belongings about ten miles down the Black Thunder Creek, where they would be removed from the influence of the main party; but when I had gotten to the end of my persuasive powers and rounded them up for the start for Newcastle, on the morning of October 7, fifteen had vanished during the night and I was compelled to remain content. And though I brought off only about one eighth of the entire party, it was an achievement to which I look back with some pride as being the most effective demonstration of the possibilities of Indian diplomacy that I have been able to exercise — under such forbidding circumstances.

The forty-six were transported to the Uintah reservation, where they remain and have entered into the spirit of the new conditions. The federal authorities were eventually moved to put a stop to the wanderings of the rest of the band.

From what I knew of their sullenness together with their attitude toward officials of the government, also of their being well armed and their evident determination to fight to the last man rather than return to Uintah, I was fearful of results should only a small detachment of troops be sent after them, and therefore suggested that a force sufficiently strong numerically to overawe them be sent, if at all, and was pleased to learn that eight troops of the Tenth Cavalry and eight of the Sixth Cavalry had started out to put a stop to their wanderings. The Indians were overtaken by the troops on the Powder River in Montana, just across the Wyoming line, where, after several days of uncertain waiting as to the outcome, and through the skillful diplomacy of Captain Carter P. Johnson, U. S. A., then of the Tenth Cavalry, now of the Second Cavalry, the Indians were induced to go to Fort Meade, South Dakota, for the winter, with the express understanding, however, that a delegation of their leading men be taken to Washington to make known their grievances. This compact was faithfully carried out, and the delegation selected by the Indians visited the seat of government during the month of January, 1907, accompanied by Captain Johnson.

In the conference held with this delegation at Washington, the Indians declined to entertain any proposition for their return to Uintah; and it being fully believed by the officers of the command operating against them that they would fight sooner than return thereto, it was humanely determined that they be sent temporarily to the Cheyenne River reservation, South Dakota, which they consented to and where they remained about a year.

I visited them at their camp on the Moreau River, in the western part of the Cheyenne River reservation, during the month of August, 1907, and found them less sullen but dissatisfied. In the autumn of 1907, the entire Sixth Regiment of cavalry was sent out to their camp to quell a disturbance growing out of their refusal to place their children in school, and after remaining about a year on the Cheyenne River reservation, South Dakota, they were prevailed upon to return to their home reservation at White Rocks, Utah, where they now are, but doubtless still discontented.

As I said before, they are unwhipped Indians.

CHAPTER XXI

GIVE THE RED MAN HIS PORTION

THE Treasury of the United States holds something like thirty-six million dollars in funds belonging to the Indians. The fund, as it stands, might be described as an endowment for the creation of paupers and the perpetuation of the present state of dependence among the people to whose credit it stands. In addition to this fund, the government holds for the Indians a vast amount in landed property, the title to a great deal of which property will pass to the Indian in twenty-five years after he accepts an allotment. The issuance of the patent in fee may be expedited by any Indian who thinks well enough of his heirs to betake himself to the happy hunting-grounds; for in that event, the land may be sold for the benefit of the decedent's family. It is quite impossible to value the land even approximately, but it is worth many millions of dollars. And, resting as he does under the weight of this burden of wealth, getting enough of it from time to time to keep the life in his body and prevent him from exerting himself to any great extent on his own behalf, the American Indian is fated to die in a state of unthrift and indigence, a sort of half-starved ward in chancery. It appears to me that it is the duty of the government to make some provision presently for the emancipation of these unhappy victims, to deliver them from the evils that guarantee a future of ungentle paupery, by giving to the Indian his portion and turning him adrift to work out his own salvation.

The Indian and his condition is not so important a matter to the majority of the people of the United States as the smashing of the trusts and the reformation of the "system"; but no question that affects the moral and physical salvation of over a quarter of a million human beings living in this country, can be lacking in importance to the rest of the people; and this problem, in which is involved the future of the Indian and the disposition of the wealth that a paternal government has sequestered for his benefit, is of imminent and practical interest to the people of the west, in particular, and to all the people of the country, in general. Moreover, the Indian problem is involved in a condition created by and for the benefit of the American people. Leaning as he does on a governmental prop that is unstable, the Indian to-day calmly asks: "What are you going to do about it?" And the question must be answered, not by the bookmen, nor by the missionary societies, but by the practical men who are to-day engaged in giving to the administration of governmental affairs the best thought and the most practical intelligence ever placed at the disposal of the people of the republic.

The solution of the Indian question is not contained in the breech-loading rifle, as was fondly imagined by the military economist of an earlier day. In the reformation of the imagination which gave birth to this idea, much blood was spilled and much rich territory wrested from the Indians, but I do not know that, on the whole, the Indian was not better off when we treated him as an enemy than he is now that we have an opportunity to practice on him the mistaken policies evolved by his quondam friends. In the sixties, when the best of the Indians — the best raw material, I mean — roamed the prairies of the west and interposed a deadly objection to the white man who was seeking to expand his sphere of influence, the policy of the white man, jumping with his interest, was for the application of force in the removal of that obstacle. I do not know that any other policy would have been equally effective in the removal of the Indian stumbling-block to the white man's car of progress. I do know that much bad blood was engendered and many valuable lives sacrificed, and that these lives might have been saved if the Indian had been treated with honesty, and the rights he was ready to maintain with the brand and tomahawk made the subject of honest bargaining. But it became the proper thing to dally with the savage Indian by misjudging his fighting capacity, sending insufficient forces against him, in the fatuous idea that he might be cowed by a show of military pomp, then fighting him in force and subduing him to the point of making him glad to accept a treaty. The treaty being made, white men broke it. The white men broke all the treaties. General Sherman, who did not love the Indian overmuch, declared that all the Indian wars were chargeable to the white men and their bad faith. Other men — not the faddists who exploit the Indian for advertising purposes — agreed with Sherman, and I know nothing to support a contention that the Indian was treacherous, and capable of breaking faith when he had made a fair engagement. For many years the Indian had been treated as an enemy, or tolerated under conditions degrading to the individual and disgraceful to the people responsible, until, in his first inaugural, General Grant proclaimed the peace policy of dealing with the aboriginal peoples.

Unfortunately, the country was not ready for the application of the peace policy. The Indians held, under the then newly made treaties, much valuable territory that the white man needed. For instance, a treaty made with the trans-Missouri Sioux in 1868 gave those people the territory included in what was known as the Great Sioux reservation. In this treaty were included the adjacent lands, held under the agreement to be ceded lands, but free to the Indian for purposes of the chase. Almost immediately after the making of the treaty, gold was discovered in the Black Hills and white men invaded the Indian territory. There is no reason for believing that the Indians would not have been glad to treat for the cession of the hills for a proper remuneration, — a trifling remuneration, considering their value. But the whites took with the strong arm what they had solemnly covenanted to the Indians. This action was totally and utterly unjustifiable, and wars undertaken with a view to driving the Sioux out of the territory that had been so positively assigned them, were as savagely wrongful as any of the Indian depredations. The climax of these wars in 1876, when Custer and his men were killed in battle, — the Little Big Horn affair was not a massacre, — brought about the making of a further treaty, by which the Sioux gave up their rights in the Black Hills, for literally a mess of pottage, the consideration being chiefly subsistence. Thirteen years later, their reservation was again cut down, but this time there was a fair adjustment of the property rights of the Indians, and the way was opened to the ultimate enfranchisement of the people. I cite these things to show, by the example of the Sioux, that the whites have forced upon the Indians the conditions under which they now exist. I do not justify the Indian for his depredations in the long ago, and it is rather late to try the white men who seized the Indian's lands,— bound to him by treaty,— but it is worth while showing that the Indian did not elect to become the pauper he is, that he was passive in the making of treaties which have resulted in giving him an inheritance that serves to delude him with the prospect of future wealth and the certainty of a present sufficiency, so far as his absolute needs are concerned.

Thirty years ago, practically, the Indian ceased to be part of a warlike institution to be coped with by force, and has been made the object of a great deal of experiment, within certain limitations, though the limitations have been changed frequently, to conform to the requirements of the time and the ideas of the experimentalists. During this period the Indian has run the gauntlet of those evils that beset the path of the individual of simple and direct mind, suddenly constrained to a new order of things, physical, mental, and moral. Thirty years ago the great body of the Indians who had found strength to stand up against the white man long after their less enduring relatives in the older settlements had succumbed, were practically savages standing at the threshold of civilization. I am frank to say that the same body of Indians to-day, measured by the standards of civilization, are not as desirable a class of people as they were when they were put into the way of becoming as the white man. They have degenerated physically, and I am not sure that they have advanced intellectually, for the standards of intellect have changed with them, or been changed for them.

As for the reasons for their degeneration: in his primitive state the Indian was a nomad, ranging over a wide tract of country, living by the chase altogether, except in a few isolated cases, taking a great deal of physical exercise incidental to his avocation as a hunter, living in the open air, eating flesh, and clothing himself according to his means and the season. The children were inured to what the white man would consider killing hardships; the women worked as hard as the men. The Indian in his native state never knew comfort in the winter, according to our notion. But he remained healthy and survived comparative hardship, because it was his natural condition. His wants were as simple as his physical and mental organization. He lived for the day and was content.

We took away from him his hunting-grounds and put him on a reservation. This reservation was generally located in a country unavailable for the use of the white man of the early day. It was not poor land, except by comparison with the richer territory surrounding it, and it was held to be good enough for the Indian. Contract hunters working for corporations, independent of Indian interference, killed the buffalo, — one of the crimes of the last generation, — and the Indian sat down on his reservation after he had killed the last edible animal within its boundaries, and waited for the government to metamorphose him into a white man. By way of curing him of his nomadic habits, he was given a fixed habitation and coerced into living in a house built by his own hands. The day the Indian moved out of his airy tepee into the closed-up house in which no provision was made for ventilation of any sort, he reduced his chance of surviving by a considerable percentage. When he was compelled to change his diet to conform to that of the whites, to eat food improperly cooked by women who knew nothing of cookery, giving up his substantial meat food and living on materials for which he was unfitted by a thousand years of training, he further lowered his chances of sustaining life. The Indian was ignorant of the laws of sanitation, but when he lived in the open, he provided against bad sanitary conditions instinctively; he moved his camp so often that the matter of sanitation never had to be considered. In his new house, he lived amidst filth because he was ignorant that it was filth. He never had a cold and his lungs were sound, in the old days. When he moved into a house from which all fresh air was excluded, he wore the same clothing indoors as in the open — as he had always been used to do. He became the prey of colds and fevers; bad sanitary conditions brought their train of disorders, and his blood was impoverished, because he was badly nourished by his new diet.

Under the circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that he died — the wonder is that any of the Indians, compelled to the changed way of living, survived. Impoverished blood brought on scrofula. It is altogether a mistake to charge the prevalence of this evil to the vices of the Indian. It has been a dreadful scourge, and the most distressing sign of the reservation Indian to-day is the vast number of individuals who show, in their scarred necks, the imprints of this awful disease, which invariably attacks, among these people, the glands of the neck. Pulmonary disorders followed close on colds that were not treated at all, and tuberculosis in its varied forms beset the wretched people. They were quite hopeless in the presence of epidemic disorders.

With all these unknown and unnamed ills beating them into the earth, the Indians sat, supine, waiting for the coming of that day in which they would live and thrive as the white man lived and throve. They had been told that they would be as white men if they obeyed the agents of the Great Father. They had not much instinctive disposition to exertion. Manual labor had never entered into the Indian's scheme of existence, and the example of the white man did not impress him much. He came to know that just before he reached the fatal point in the process of starvation, the government would come to his rescue, and, if he was not content, he was passive under conditions he could neither understand nor cope with. His children died of disorders he had never heard of, and his parents died in the long winter nights. He was a probationer in the school of civilization, and he was having a hard time of it. He was by turns browbeaten and cajoled, bribed and punished, threatened and rewarded, and all of the worst elements in his character developed for want of firm, consistent, and honest treatment. Gradually the cunning that had been his in woodcraft and fighting changed in form, and he came to know that he could, by the exercise of cunning of another sort, get things from the white man. His simplicity and directness of character gave way to his needs, and he met bargain-hunting whites as a bargainer. He made better terms for the cession of his unproductive lands, and the government became his banker for the enormous amount of wealth that is his curse to-day, — a veritable mine from which he may take only enough to keep body and soul together while loafing between payments, a handicap in the development of the country to which the government holds a trust-title for him.

In a recent official tour of duty, I spent a couple of months among a band of Indians located in South Dakota, who have been settled in their present location for upward of thirty-five years. When the band was first formally located, it consisted of about fifteen hundred souls. For over twenty years the people lived by their own resources. Occasionally it was necessary to assist them, but they had no invested wealth, no fund upon which to draw, no income from leased lands. They had a bad time at first, there is no doubt of that, but they survived it and I know that they had become thrifty to a certain extent. They had no debts, for they owned no capital and had no expectations. There was a natural decrease in the numbers owing to infant mortality and a high death rate, the result of changed conditions, but they grew in total strength, by reason of accessions of their own people from other parts of the country. They had become practically self-supporting, living by their herds, by trapping, and by the cultivation of small tracts of land. In twenty years they had grown to their changed condition and the birth-rate equaled the death-rate. My experience goes to show that this period generally carries them past the line of decrease and brings them to where they hold their own against death and disease.

In the process of civilization, they had arrived at a stage of their progress when, as a part of the usual policy, they were given their lands in severalty. To each individual was allotted one hundred and sixty acres of land, the title to which was to be held in trust by the government for twenty-five years and then patented in fee to the allottee. The allotted lands were to be free of taxes during the trust period. The balance of the reservation was thrown open to settlement and sale under the laws, and the moneys obtained by the sale of these lands were to be held in trust by the government, and five per cent per annum interest to be paid. This plan, which is that generally followed, had all the evidences of a beneficent and well-digested scheme. It assured each Indian a farm in a country that is fertile to a degree, where crops fail but infrequently, and where the white man, who has no expectations from government, makes a satisfactory income for a family on a quarter section of land. The land that was thrown open to settlement was greedily seized upon, and there was at once accumulated a large fund to the credit of the Indians. And that fund was the undoing of them.

The interest on the fund has been devoted very largely to the maintenance of a boarding-school for Indians, and out of the capital fund, the Indians have been paid substantial sums from time to time. Altogether, in the fifteen years that have elapsed since the first payment, the Indians have received about nine hundred dollars per capita in disbursements out of the fund created by the sale of the lands taken by settlers in the reservation. In addition to this, they have received a considerable income in the form of moneys from leased lands and from other sources. As the families are comparatively large, the income of each household has been quite sufficient to keep the people from want, and even to make them comfortable, if it was not for their expensive and improvident habits.

The total of Indians on the reservation has increased until they now number about nineteen hundred souls, part of the recent increase being natural, the Indians having passed the danger-mark attained by the lowering of their physical condition. There has also been a considerable gain through the increase in the number of mixed marriages. Altogether this body of Indians might be taken as fairly showing the result of the policy of holding the Indian in wardship and making him heir to wealth that is being gradually distributed.

And I have no hesitancy in saying that the condition of these Indians to-day is not as hopeful as it was eighteen years ago, when they had no wealth in expectancy and no payments to depend on. Their advancement has been greatly retarded by the system under which they live. They lack the manly qualities that distinguished them generally fifteen or twenty years ago; they have no self-dependence; they lean upon the government or the agent in all their affairs; they are in debt. They squander the money that is given them — I am speaking of the people generally, for there are a few notable exceptions to this rule. The younger people have little pride of ancestry and no care for the future. The older people have neither ambition nor hope — beyond the next payment. They are utterly listless of the passing of time, except as it brings a payment nearer, and are much given to the cheaper amusements of the whites and the inane dances of their ancestors. Fifteen years of annuity-drawing has made of a people that was struggling to the surface by personal effort, a set of paupers in chancery. I do not mean that they beg, for they do not. They are rather purse-proud in the knowledge that the government holds for them something like seven hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars, but they are just as certainly indigents to-day as though they were kept in almshouses. Ten years more of annuity-drawing and their case will be utterly hopeless. They will be stripped of their farms, as soon as they are patented, by their more thrifty neighbors. Then, perhaps, they will go to work in order to eat. They are Indians at heart, with some of the cheap vices of the white man and all of the helplessness of the naturally indigent; they have not advanced intellectually along any line that will do them good; the children and the younger people speak English, but their shyness keeps them to thinking and talking among themselves in Sioux, and they would be better off, so far as the future is concerned, if they stood as blanketed Indians on the virgin prairie.

I instance this band as a sample of what has been accomplished by governmental administration of Indian funds. They prove incontrovertibly the demoralizing effect of the present system, and they stand as a fair sample of people treated as they have been.

Fortunately, not all of the Indians have money in the treasury upon which to draw. I say "fortunately," for the Indian who has nothing at all, either at present or in expectancy, is much better off than these, and infinitely better material upon which to work. These people of whom I have been speaking are Sioux, and nominally classed as being far in advance of their relatives, the Teton Sioux of the trans-Missouri country. As a matter of fact, the Indians of the trans-Missouri reservations, who have practically no income save that which is produced by leasing their lands for grazing purposes, or what they earn by labor, are infinitely better off than these civilized and wealthy cousins of theirs. The Teton Sioux is better physically and morally, and of stronger mentality, than the annuitant. He has been compelled to exert himself since he was driven out of his hunting-grounds, and he has had rather better health than some of his compeers, for that reason. He has passed through the transitory stage involved in the change of his manner of life, and he is recovering from the anæmic condition to which he was reduced by the change from the tepee to the log house, from fresh meat to cereal foods. For seven years he has had no government assistance, except for the maintenance of schools and rations for the aged and indigent, and he is now taking his land in severalty. The demoralization will come if the present system obtains. And it is outrageous to contemplate the pauperization of a people that gave birth to such men as John Grass and Gall.

There are not lacking examples showing that the Indian can subsist himself in independence, when freed from the hot-house forcing of civilized growth. The Navajos, the most populous of the tribes with the possible exception of the Sioux, numbering close to twenty-five thousand, live at peace and in Indian comfort — undisturbed because they inhabit a country totally unfit for the habitation of the white man — in Arizona. They receive no government aid. They are men, they live in the open air generally, and they require very little clothing. They have not succumbed to the missionaries, are generally pagans, and they have very few scholars — according to the standards of the schools. They live in a country that is rich in nothing but the cactus and sand, and they live on their herds and flocks, supplementing their income by the manufacture of what are considered the finest blankets in the world. I am very sanguine of the Navajo working out his own salvation. He will be left alone, for no man wants his land and the processes of civilization will affect him gradually and by absorption.

Between the uncounted Navajo and the allotment Indian of South Dakota, there is a very great distance, and the state of the people who dwell amidst the two is generally more or less hopeful, according to the condition of the tribes or bands when they entered into the enjoyment of wealth. The Osages are enormously wealthy, having a fund of above eight million dollars with an annual income of more than four hundred thousand dollars. I know of no sharper commentary on the effect of wealth upon the Indian than the fact stated in the 1904 report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, showing that among this tribe but ten persons were engaged in labor in civilized pursuits.

I would not argue that the economic and social condition of the Indian is satisfactory in the inverse ratio to his wealth; but it appears certain to me that the Indian who attained to the right to draw a dole from the government before he had developed up to the state of being able to get a living for himself, is laboring under a serious handicap, and is at a standstill or retrograding.

I have no figures at hand showing the amount of money held in trust in the treasury and belonging to the Indians, later than October 31, 1906. The annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1906 showed the amount to be $36,352,950.85, drawing an annual interest of $1,788,237.23. This may have been slightly reduced, and it may have been increased, but the sum now in trust is certainly in excess of thirty-six million dollars. Upon this enormous total, the government is paying interest at the rate of five per cent, except in a few instances, in which the rate is four per cent. Among the tribes and bands having the largest interest in this fund, the Osages stand at the head with $8,493,570.07 to their credit; other rich Indians are the united bands interested in the Apache, Kiowa, and Comanche fund, $1,500,600.00; Cheyenne and Arapahoe in Oklahoma, $1,000,000.00; Cherokee, $1,542,780.77; Creek, $2,472,930.95; Chickasaw, $693,061.79; Chippewa, in Minnesota, $4,096,203.92; Menominee of Wisconsin, $2,268,330.86; Sac and Fox of the Mississippi, $1,252,054.41; Sac and Fox of the Missouri, $100,400.00; Seminole, $2,070,000.00; Sioux of the former Great Sioux reservation, $2,955,678.40; Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux, $785,454.62; Yankton Sioux, $480,008.00; Crow Creek Sioux, $89,454.73; Ute, $1,750,000.00; Winnebago, $883,249.50; Omaha, $373,136.52; Blackfeet, $275,909.50; Klamath, $350,000.00; Otoe and Missouria, $505,147.53; Pawnee, $400,001.15; Pottawatomie, $414,158.77, and Umatilla, $306,037.63; together with the respective amounts of various other tribes, aggregating $1,386,236.65.

These immense holdings are being doled out to the Indians by a pauperizing system in sums inadequate to their needs, yet sufficient to give the annuitants the sense of being provided for. I am not sure but that the average white man, if assured of a sufficient income to scratch along on, would not proceed to become an Indian after his fashion. These people, who are but a step removed from the simplicity of savagery and have an instinctive dislike to any sort of exertion in the form of labor, take very enthusiastically to a system that permits them to live in Indian ease.

This is the problem that confronts the white man: How is the Indian to be saved from himself and his riches?

To me the question admits of but one answer. Give the people the money they have coming; give it to them as soon as possible. So soon as the proper official declares that an Indian is competent to administer his own affairs, let that Indian have his portion of the fund, also a patent in fee for his allotment, and let him shift for himself. This procedure would relieve the government of the care of these funds and build up manhood and individual self-reliance, which can never be realized under the present doling-out process. Do away with the leading-strings and check-reins by which the Indian is now so handicapped, and he will immediately feel the necessity for demonstrating his capacity to manage his own estate. By this means *only* can the Indian be saved from chronic indigence and ultimate and absolute paupery; and I am sufficiently well acquainted with Indian nature to venture the prophecy that a large majority of those under fifty years of age will develop the capacity to hustle for themselves exactly in the proportion that their needs press them. Take away his annuity by letting him handle the principal, and the Indian will be given a start on the road to complete civilization and independence, that will land him at the desired goal in nine cases out of ten.

FINIS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The following is the index of the 1910 edition renumbered to conform with the pagination of the Superior edition. For additional information on Sitting Bull, Hawkman and Shavehead see appendix.

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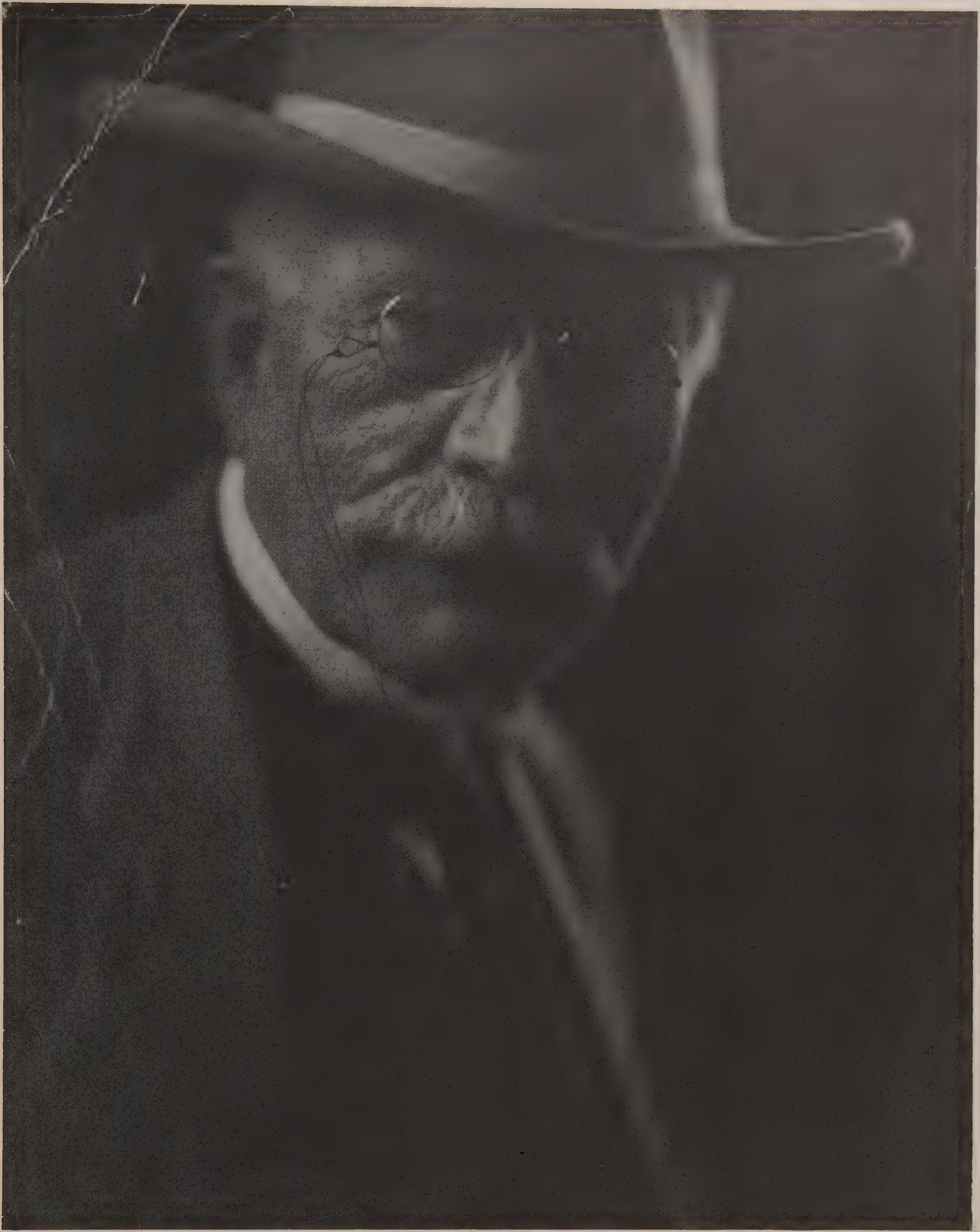


INSPECTOR JAMES McLAUGHLIN
Photo courtesy R. C. McLaughlin

APPENDIX

Preface and Epilogue by Rev. Louis Pfaller

THE THREE MISSING CHAPTERS

THIRTEEN — Sitting Bull's Death Aftermath
FOURTEEN — How Hawkman Rode to His Death
FIFTEEN — Shave Head's Code of Honor

Preface to the Three Missing Chapters

By Rev. Louis L. Pfaller, O.S.B.

When Houghton Mifflin published **My Friend the Indian** in 1910, it omitted three chapters (originally Thirteen, Fourteen and Fifteen) from the manuscript submitted by Major McLaughlin. The reason for this can best be understood in the story of the writing of the book. During the first ten years (1895-1905) which McLaughlin spent as Inspector for the Department of the Interior, he visited reservations far and wide. Wherever he went he held people spellbound by the accounts of his experiences with the Sioux Indians on Devils Lake and Standing Rock Agencies, 1871-1895. His listeners urged him to write a book of recollections, but he demurred because of lack of time and experience in writing. Finally, after considerable encouragement, he commenced the work in 1905 with the aid of a St. Paul newspaperman, W. B. Hennessy.

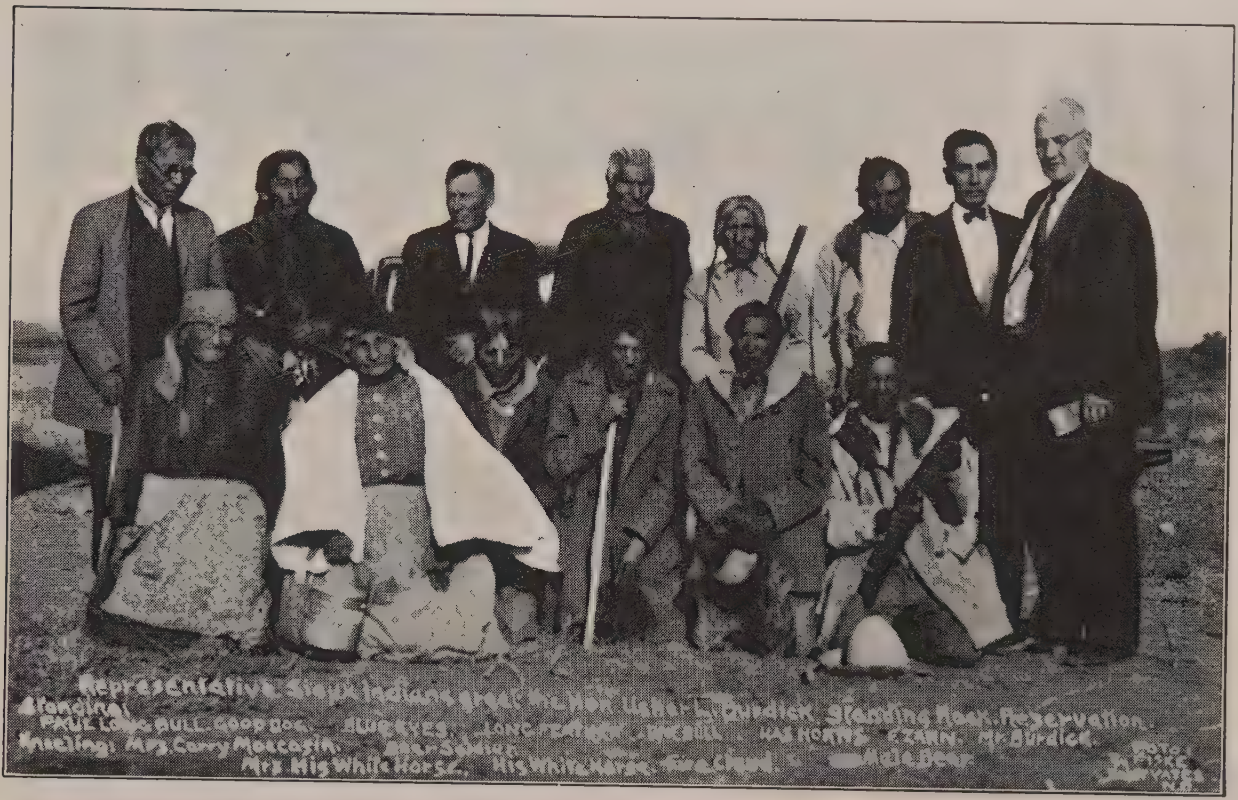
At first he confined his story to events in his own experience, but as he wrote and traveled he could not resist relating stories he had learned from Indians in other parts of the country. Under the expanded view, he devoted three chapters to the story of the Little Big Horn Battle as told to him by the Sioux. From Chief Joseph he garnered many details of the famous flight of the Nez Perce in 1877 and he visited Bear Paw Mountain to see the trenches the Indians had dug. And it was from his visit to the awesome lava beds in Oregon that he captured the excitement of the bloody conflict under Captain Jack's Modocs in 1873.

During 1906 he found little time to write, but the delay was most fortunate, for after his exciting pursuit of the run-away Utes in the fall of that year he could recount his experience in a vigorous new chapter, "The Unwhipped Utes." In 1907 he submitted his manuscript to Macmillan and to Scribners. Both rejected it; Scribners felt that the topic was not "timely." McLaughlin next sought the assistance of the noted author, George Bird Grinnell, in revising the manuscript, and in 1909 he submitted the new version to Houghton Mifflin of Boston. The editors were pleased with the content, but objected to the length. They wished to keep the cost of printing down so that the book could be marketed for $2.50. Few people wished to pay more for a book in those days. McLaughlin seems to have made the decision on which chapters would be dropped. He considered them all important, but since Thirteen, Fourteen and Fifteen were enlargements of Eleven and Twelve, they could more readily be dropped than other chapters.

The abbreviated text rolled off the press in 1910 and soon went through nine printings, totalling 4,089 copies. In 1926 a thousand more copies were printed with a special introduction by George Bird Grinnell. In 1931, Usher L. Burdick examined the original manuscript in the home of Mrs. R. S. McLaughlin and discovered the three omitted chapters. He was convinced that "these chapters throw additional light on the many stirring events relating to the Sioux Trouble on Grand River in 1890," and that "the amazing and authentic history" of the Sioux as told in **My Friend the Indian** "is not complete without adding thereto Chapters Thirteen, Fourteen and Fifteen, which have been omitted from all editions."

Burdick published the three chapters as a booklet in 1936. Now, more than sixty years, the entire manuscript fittingly appears in a single volume.

All three chapters deal with persons and events in the Ghost Dance troubles of 1890. Chapter Thirteen was written as a refutation of the criticism leveled at McLaughlin for his part in the arrest and death of Sitting Bull. It includes many of the documents cited by him in his **apologia** published in the **Sixtieth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior** (Washington, 1891), pp. 327-338. As one reads the accounts of Hawkman and Shave Head in Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen, he senses the admiration and gratitude McLaughlin felt towards these heroes in the Ghost Dance drama. The granite shaft erected over their graves at Fort Yates is an enduring reminder of McLaughlin's affection for his loyal Indian Police.


Representative Sioux Indians greet the Hon Usher L. Burdick Standing Rock Reservation.
Standing:
PAUL Long BULL. GOOD DOG. BLUE EYES. LONG FEATHER. BULL. HAS HORNS. EZAHN. Mr Burdick.
Kneeling: Mrs. Carry Moccasin. Soldier
Mrs His White Horse. His White Horse. Fire Cloud. Male Bear

THE OLD INDIANS IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH WERE FOLLOWERS OF SITTING BULL OR POLICEMEN DURING THE GHOST DANCE TROUBLE

Publisher's Note:

Because the text of the Superior edition of "My Friend the Indian" is a photographic facsimile of the original 1910 edition certain small errors made in the first edition have been perpetuated. The most serious are on page 14 top left on what was originally page 52. The word should be excess instead of access. On page 58 of what was page 221 the date should be 1890 not 1900.

In the three missing chapters, because they are likewise facsimiles (of the Burdick Pamphlet) our editors have discovered several typographical errors, but from a collector's viewpoint we felt obligated to reproduce as originally published.

INTRODUCTION

Major James McLaughlin first published his book entitled My Friend The Indian in 1910, Houghton Mifflin & Company being the publishers. A second edition was published in 1916 and a third edition in 1926. In this edition George Bird Grinnell contributed a valuable introduction.

At the death of Major McLaughlin in 1923, all his books, manuscripts and papers came into the possession of Mrs. R. S. McLaughlin, of McLaughlin, South Dakota, a daughter-in-law of the Major's. In 1931 the writer examined these papers and among them discovered the manuscript of the book MY FRIEND THE INDIAN. In the original manuscript there were three chapters, not contained in the published book. As the manuscript was originally written, these chapters were Numbers 13, 14 and 15. Later among these papers it was found that all three chapters had been rejected by the publishers in 1910, the reason not appearing for the rejection.

Chapter 13 is entitled,
Sitting Bull's Death Aftermath.
Chapter 14 is entitled,
How Hawkman Rode To His Death.
Chapter 15 is entitled,
Shave Heads Code of Honor.

For twenty-five years now these missing chapters have remained unpublished. In now presenting these "Missing Chapters" no change has been made in any statements or the language in which these statements were made. Those who read them now may rely that they are the actual writings of the Major tho written many years ago. There is no question but what these chapters throw additional light on the many stirring events relating to the Sioux Trouble on Grand River in 1890, and for that reason they are published as contributions to the History of the Sioux.

My Friend The Indian contains such an amazing and authentic history of that period in which the savage Sioux were brought under the influence of our civilization, that it has been widely read, necessitating three editions. The story there published is not complete without adding thereto Chapters Thirteen, Fourteen and Fifteen, which have been omitted from all editions.

USHER L. BURDICK.

MY FRIEND THE INDIAN

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

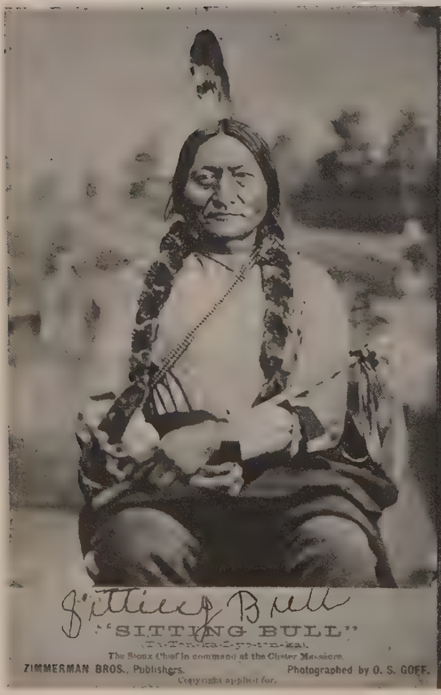
SITTING BULL'S DEATH AFTERMATH

How He Was Martyrized By The Sensational Press And His Taking Off Made The Subject Of Official Correspondence

The death of Sitting Bull and its circumstances made that worthy a martyr at the hands of the sensational press—which had been demanding his suppression for months—but elicited from the authorities understanding the situation instant sympathetic appreciation of the merits of the policemen who had died in doing a duty for which they should have been thanked by the whole country. The arrest of Sitting Bull was demanded—made necessary—as a peace measure. If he had been allowed to continue stirring up the Indian people, if he had not been summarily prevented from leaving the Reservation as he intended, there is no possible doubt that he would have led an outbreak that might have cost hundreds of lives and the outlay of much treasure in its suppression. His death was an incident of the arrest of a desperate man surrounded by even more desperate followers. As an act of blood-letting it was to be deplored, but it was not to be thought of in the face of the fact that several brave and determined men who had no other object than the carrying out of orders given them officially, had lost their lives through his demand that his people shoot down his captors. I regretted the death of Sitting Bull not only because the act that precipitated it brought about the killing of six Indian policemen, together with himself and seven of his staunchest supporters, and although the elimination of the old medicine man was necessary for the welfare of the community, I was exceedingly sorry over his demise at the time and the way that it occured. I stood for peace, the peace of the community and welfare of the well-disposed Indians, and thought that the arrest would be made without bloodshed. It was not the shedding of Sitting Bull's blood that I regretted so much as I did the killing of the loyal Indian policemen who were

Sitting Bull was taught to sign his name but that was the extent of his school learning.

Mrs. Spotted Bull who recounted incidents of the Custer Battle to Major McLaughlin.
Credit Smithsonian Institute - Courtesy Assumption Abbey Archives.


Sitting Bull
"SITTING BULL"
(Ta-Tan-ka-I-yo-ta-ka)
The Sioux Chief in command at the Custer Massacre.
ZIMMERMAN BROS., Publishers.
Photographed by O. S. GOFF.
Copyright applied for.

Fort Totten near Devils Lake, North Dakota.
Photo from the collection of the State Historical Society of North Dakota - Courtesy Assumption Abbey Archives.

shot down by crazed fanatics on Sitting Bull's order. And he brought on the trouble which ended in his death and also the killing of much better men than he was.

It was, therefore, with some surprise that my attention was called shortly after the bloody event of December 15, 1890, to the fact that some newspapers were inclined to find fault with the manner of the arrest and death of Sitting Bull. It was charged that he was unjustifiably killed—and the charge was made generally by the people and papers that had been clamoring all summer for the extinction of the old mischief-maker. I had paid no attention to these clamors hitherto and was not disposed to give them heed after the event. But I believe that the official correspondence and comment on the death of Sitting Bull, and the putting down by official proofs of the absurd stories that became current in the weeks immediately succeeding the bloody affair on Grand River, should be set forth here. I do not do this as a matter of self-justification; that was never necessary. The part I had in the affair was merely that of an official whose business it was to preserve the peace. I had the prompt and cordial support of my superiors and, if I sought gratification, had the satisfaction of knowing that the general commanding the Department, and the major general of the army of the United States, in their official reports commended my action in the matter.

But there still linger in the minds of some people—impressed at the time by the publication of fakes about the murder of Sitting Bull, the theft of his body for the purpose of putting it on exhibition, and other yarns equally absurd—erroneous ideas that should be dissipated—and I am minded to close this section of my career by giving some of the official correspondence and reports concerning the event. This is not by the way of apology or self-justification, but merely a rounding out of the story I have endeavored to record.

December 16, 1890, Colonel Drum reported the matter in detail to the military authorities—at whose instance the arrest was essayed—and on the same day I made a detailed report to the Indian Office. In response to my report I received the following from Commissioner of Indian Affairs, T. J. Morgan:

"Washington, Dec. 30, 1890.

"James McLaughlin,
U. S. Indian Agent,
Standing Rock, N. D.

"Sir:

"Your communication of the 16th inst. is received wherein you report in detail the arrest and subsequent death of Sitting Bull, speak of the bravery and good judgment of your Indian police, recommend that the noble services of the survivors receive substantial recognition, that the families of those who were killed will be amply provided for, and that this department and the War Department join in an effort to obtain congressional action to that end if necessary.

"In reply you are informed that this office will do all in its power to have Congress recognize and reward the praiseworthy and valuable services rendered by these men and to provide for the needs of the families of those who were killed and, in the meantime, you will see to it that they do not suffer for lack of any supplies or requisites for their sustenance and comfort, and any specific recommendation you may make in regard to them, pending legislation in their favor, will be carefully considered and promptly approved by me, if practicable and proper.

"I also desire you to publicly commend in my name the bravery and fidelity of the force and inform the survivors that, while I sincerely regret that the taking of life was necessary, it is gratifying to me to know that I have such reliable assistants in my efforts to promote the welfare of these people and that their noble conduct has been highly praised wherever spoken of.

"Respectfully,
T. J. MORGAN,
Commissioner."

This sufficiently voices the sentiments of the Indian Office of that day regarding the action of the Indian Police at Standing Rock. I state it now, as a regrettable fact, that the proposed Congressional action for the relief of the families of the men who died in the affair on Grand River is still in contemplation.

Fort Yates in its prime
© by F.B. Fiske

Fort Yates in its prime.
Fiske photo - Courtesy Assumption Abbey Archives.

Successive Congresses have failed to find time or money to provide for the families of the red heroes who laid down their lives that morning and prevented what I verily believe would have been a disastrous out-break. So much for the claims of the red widows and orphans.

In response to a further report made by me by telegraph and evoked by the necessity for showing what was going on at the Standing Rock Reservation, while war was imminent on other Sioux Reservations, I received the following from Commissioner Morgan:

"Washington, Jan. 12, 1891.

"James McLaughlin,
U. S. Indian Agent,
Standing Rock, N. D.

"Sir:

"I have read with gratification your telegram of the 10th inst., and am glad to know that the Standing Rock Indians have been so very generally loyal to the Government.

"Please say to the Indians of your agency that I very much regret the loss of life that has occured. It has been a very sad matter to me as well as the Indians. I appreciate the fact that those who have remained steadfast and have taken no part in the hostilities have done so against the entreaties of some of their friends and sometimes at considerable cost to themselves. They will see plainly hereafter that they chose the wise course and that those who did otherwise made a miserable mistake. I rejoice at the loyalty which they have manifested in this trying time and will do everything in my power to promote their prosperity.

"I also wish to express my appreciation of the skill and firmness with which you have held the Standing Rock Indians and managed the affairs of the Agency, and I trust that peace and progress among the Indians will abundantly witness to the wisdom and efficiency of your administration.

"Very respectfully,

T. J. MORGAN,
Commissioner."

This was written at the time when the Indians at the other agencies were in a ferment and just subsequent to the Wounded Knee disaster at Pine Ridge Agency.

At the moment, the Indians of the Standing Rock Reservation were under absolute control, yet there could be no doubt that there was a great deal of excitement among those of them who had been taken by the Messiah craze. It had appealed very strongly to many men who were restrained from joining in the ghost dancing out of regard for myself and because they had given their promise to live as white men. But the religion, preached for his own sinister ends by Sitting Bull, was calculated to appeal to the Indian mind—and the Indian mind, as I have tried to show elsewhere, is attuned to a pitch altogether different to that of the white man. It is capable of great depths in some directions while childishly shallow, according to our standards, in others. These people had gone very close to a baptism of blood; they had seen destroyed in an instant the power of Sitting Bull; his medicine had proved altogether useless and ineffective, and their ideals were thus upset. So it was, that they came in to the agency and talked gravely and calmly enough of what had happened and speculated upon what was happening elsewhere. Those of their relatives and friends who had fled from the Reservation, scattered by the Sitting Bull affair, were few in number, comparatively, and they got no sympathy from those who were left. But they were excited under their cover of indifference and required careful handling —not that they had any notion of leaving the Reservation, but because the events that had transpired might adversely effect their attitude with regard to civilization.

With the guidance of affairs of the Reservation, the necessity for giving proper care to the families of the people killed, and the other conditions to which I have referred, it was a strenuous time at the Agency. Through it all the chiefs and influential men, chiefly, Gall, Grass, Gray Eagle, and other men of influence could be depended upon, and they exerted a most benign influence on the rest of the people, and I had little apprehension as to the future within the confines of the Reservation—if only the pernicious influence of the fault-finding busybodies and fakers outside did not have a baneful effect.

All sorts of stories were spread through the press and many efforts were made to make it appear that I was not in sympathy with the military and that the War Department was not satisfied with my handling of the disaffected Indians. But the official reports of the military men and the comments of the superior officers put a quietus on all this.

There never was any disagreement between myself and the military men in the matter. I am proud of the fact that I had then, as I have now, many scores of excellent and cordial friends in the army and that I added to the number of them during that winter. I had been in thorough sympathy and touch with Colonel Drum all through the affair and there was not the slightest friction between the agency people and the soldiery at Fort Yates. This was a condition established during my residence as Agent at Standing Rock. The time had been when no civil word was passed between the civilians of the Agency and the military people of Fort Yates, during which time had a man on either side of the fence, dividing the Agency grounds from the Fort Yates Garrison limits, given any evidence of friendship for one on the other side, it was regarded sufficient to brand the friendly one as disloyal to his superior.

But all this had been changed and there was perfect accord on each side. Capt. E. G. Fechet, who commanded the Eighth Cavalry detachment supporting the Indian Police in the arrest of Sitting Bull, did full justice to the Indian Police in his report and this report was endorsed by Colonel Drum, and this brings me to another bit of official history in the form of a letter from Hon. John W. Noble, then secretary of the Interior, with some enclosures. Here is the letter:

"Department of the Interior,
Washington, Jan. 16, 1891.

"James McLaughlin,
U. S. Indian Agent,
Standing Rock, N. D.

"Sir:

"I enclose herewith a copy of the report of Capt. E. G. Fechet, commanding Eighth Cavalry, Fort Yates, N. D., together with the report of Lieut. Col. W. F. Drum, commanding the post, to the Adjutant General, Department of Dakota, in relation to the arrest and death of Sitting Bull on the 15th Ult.

"In these reports, as well as in the endorsement of the General of the army forwarding them to the Secretary of War, special mention is made of your action as commendable and of that of the Indian Police as marked by bravery and fidelity in this affair to which your attention is particularly invited.

"Very respectfully,
JOHN W. NOBLE,
Secretary."

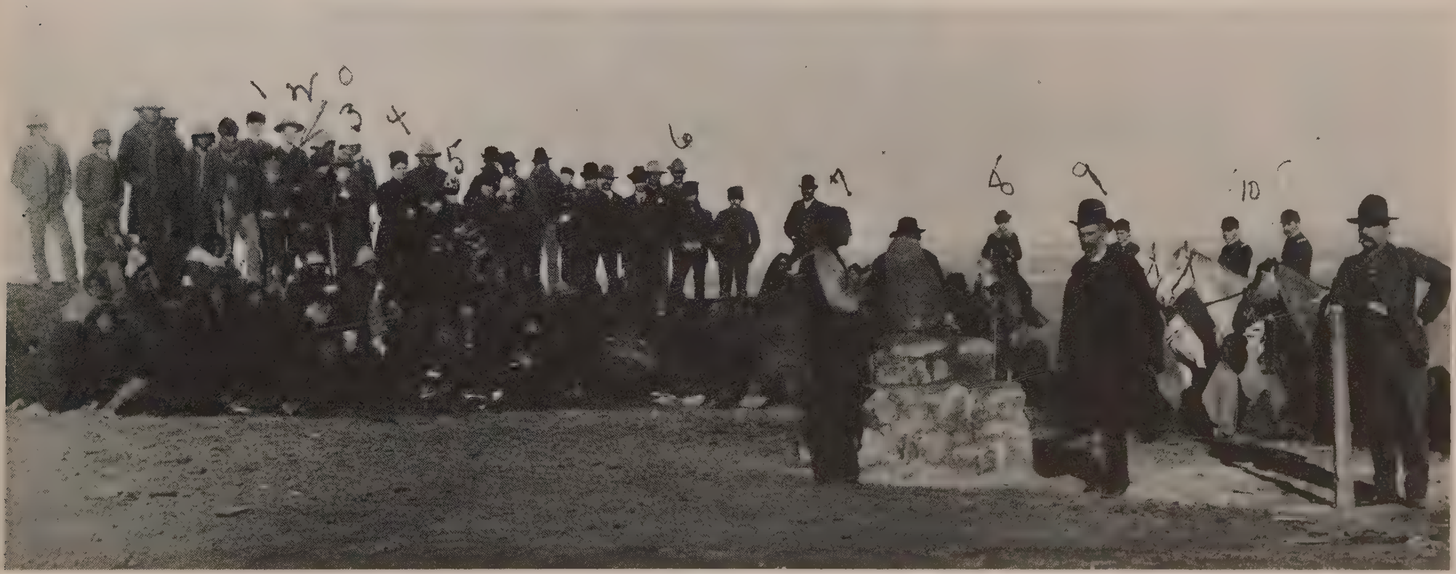
This should dispose of the stories that were widely circulated at that time concerning the attitude of the army officers toward me as an Indian Agent, but I am moved to add some extracts from a letter written later that year by Capt. Jesse M. Lee, U. S. A., now Major General, retired, to Colonel Drum, and by the latter handed to me; I cherish it very highly as I had not the honor of Captain Lee's personal acquaintance until only a few months prior to this time. The Captain had a wide knowledge of Indian affairs and knew the condition of things at many Agencies which he had visited officially. I quote from this letter, dated Chicago, August 20, 1891:

"I regret exceedingly that any man would think of making any complaints against Major McLaughlin, and I also regret that any credence should be given to such complaints against the best Indian Agent in the service. In my official reports through military channels I took pleasure in saying as much. I had heard much of Major McLaughlin's good work, but when I saw with my own eyes what he had done and was doing, I realized that the half had not been told me.

"The Department should hold up his hands and support him and his good wife in their grand work instead of permitting anyone to try to pull them down. If I had the opportunity of seeing Commissioner Morgan and talking to him, I would take especial delight in informing him fully as to my high opinion of Major McLaughlin as an Indian Agent and a gentleman.

"No greater wrong can be done to the Indian service, to the progress of the Indians, than to impair in any way the influence

This picture taken on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation during the dedication of the Standing Rock memorial, showing Major McLaughlin and Sitting Bull on either side of the monument.
#2—Harry McLaughlin (eldest son). #3—Imelda McLaughlin (only daughter). #4—Marie Louise (Buisson) McLaughlin (the Major's wife). #5—Agnes Witzleben (wife of the Supt. of Indian Schools). #6—"Sports Whitsell" (a mixed blood of the Sioux). #7—Sitting Bull. #8—Jack McLaughlin (son of the Major). #9—Major McLaughlin (Indian Agent). #10—Two Army Officers of the Fort Yates Post. #11—Joe Primeau (Interpreter). O—Sibley McLaughlin (youngest son and father of R. C. McLaughlin. Picture taken in 1890.
Photo courtesy R. C. McLaughlin.



of such an agent as Major McLaughlin is well known to be. It is nothing less than an outrage." And adds that he "fears that the high regard in which army officers hold Major McLaughlin may have something to do with the activity of the people who criticize him."

I may be pardoned for quoting this letter which is given as an indication of the general attitude of my friends of the army toward me in those days.

It was in the early and strenuous days of that winter that there floated into the Agency from the outside world a story that was at once funny and exasperating. Some string-fiend had sent out a fake to the effect that arrangements had been made, or were being made, for putting the remains of Sitting Bull on exhibition. When I heard of the story first, I paid no attention to it. I had been present at the burial of Sitting Bull, and I knew that his grave had not been disturbed. But, absurd as the story was, it attracted attention in the East and there are perhaps some people who still believe there may have been something in it. In any event, the fake was not permitted to get past without being officially noted, and I was not much astonished—considering the other absurd things that had been called officially to the attention of the Department—to receive one day an official communication concerning it.

At the time, Dr. T. A. Bland, an enthusiatic, if not always discreet, friend of the Indian, was at the head of the National Indian Defense Association. In that day the friends of the Indian in the East got much of their information as to the events in the camp of the people they would befriend from the public prints. The writers of Indian news generally got their information as to the Indian from imaginations that were not much exercised. But when the chief officer of the Indian Defense Association addressed a communication to the Indian Office it had to be given official attention. Dr. Bland heard, or read, that Sitting Bull was to be used for post mortem show purposes and he wrote the Commissioner of the Indian Affairs a letter which was referred to me for a report. Here is the letter:

"National Indian Defense Association,
Washington, D. C.,
December 27, 1890.

"To the Honorable Commissioner,
Indian Affairs,
Washington, D. C.

"Sir:

"I observe in the public press a statement to the effect that the body of Sitting Bull was removed from the coffin before it was buried and taken to a dissecting room. The reasonable supposition is that it is the intention of the parties having the matter in charge to make his bones a subject of speculation and perhaps his skin also, as the papers state that a Bismarck merchant offered $1,000 for it.

"I beg to ask if you do not hold it the duty of the Government, as guardian of the Indians to inquire into this matter and take measures to punish any parties, whether Government officials or not, who may be found guilty of such desecration of the dead chief's body?

"Respectfully,
T. A. BLAND."

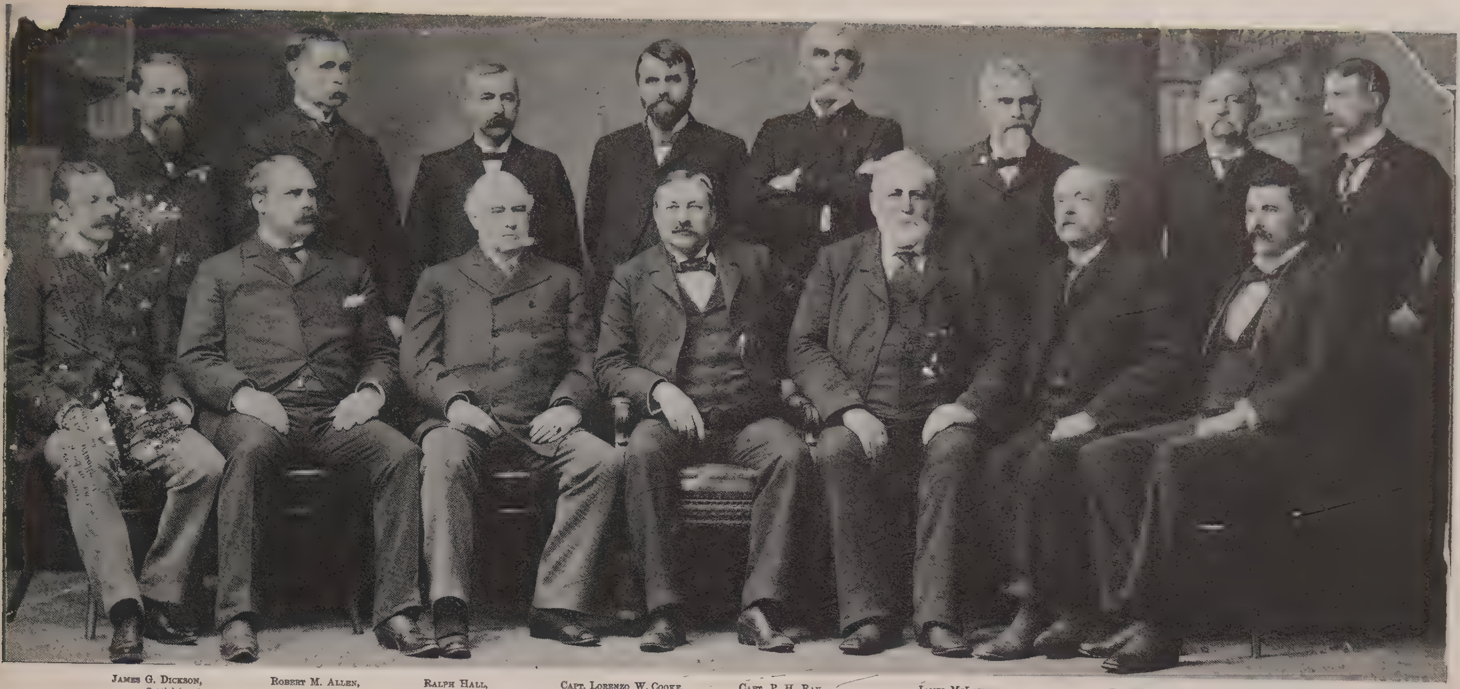
Looking back at it now it is all a ghastly joke, but at that time it was rather a serious matter in the aspect it presented to the public—this outcome of the fake of Bismarck string-fiend. Dr. Bland's letter was referred to me for an explanation, and without comment, by Commissioner Morgan, and as the body of Sitting Bull was never in my possession—except in that it was brought in from Grand River by the Indian police under my control—I could do nothing but refer the Bland letter to Colonel Drum with this endorsement:

"Standing Rock Agency, Jan. 23, 1891.

"As the body of Sitting Bull was taken to the military post of Fort Yates upon its arrival from Grand River, this paper is respectfully referred to the commanding officer of Fort Yates for such information as he may be pleased to make concerning the matter to assist me in replying to the Commissioner's letter.

"JAMES McLAUGHLIN,
U. S. Indian Agent."

Left: Standing Rock and seated Indian woman.
Center: The grave of the Indian policeman killed in the Sitting Bull arrest.
Photo from the collection of the State Historical Society of North Dakota - Courtesy Assumption Abbey Archives.
Right: McLaughlin and Chief Kai-Kai-She of the Flatheads, St. Ignatius, Montana, says R. C. McLaughlin. "I am quite sure this picture was taken on Feb. 22, 1913, at Fort Wadsworth as the Chief is holding the picture of the Rodman Wanamaker monument dedicated to the North American Indian. James McLaughlin was among the honored guests, and speakers, on that occasion. I have the silver plaque presented to my Grandfather on that date from Mr. Wanamaker."



J. George Wright, Rosebud Agency, South Dakota.
James G. Dickson, Special Agent, St. Louis, Mo.
Lt. W. A. Mercer, La Pointe Agency, Ashland, Wis.
Robert M. Allen, White Earth Agency, Becker Co., Minn.
Frank C. Armstrong, *Assistant Commissioner*, Washington, D. C.
Ralph Hall, Devil's Lake Agency, Fort Totten, Benson Co., N. D.
Capt. Lorenzo W. Cooke, Blackfeet Agency, Piegan P. O., Teton Co., Mont.
D. M. BROWNING, *Commissioner*, Washington, D. C.
Capt. P. H. Ray, Shoshone Agency, Fremont Co., Wyoming.
Peter Couchman, Cheyenne River Agency, Dewey Co., S. D.
James McLaughlin, Standing Rock Agency, Fort Yates, N. D.
Capt. Wm. H. Clapp, Fort Berthold Agency, Elbowoods, N. D.
James A. Smith, Yankton Agency, Greenwood, S. D.
Anton M. Keller, Sisseton Agency, Roberts Co., S. D.
Frederick Treon, Crow Creek and Lower Brule Agency, Crow Creek, Buffalo Co., S. D.

OFFICERS OF THE UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE,
WASHINGTON, D. C., JANUARY 10th, 1895.

Officially, Colonel Drum was not called upon to go into the matter. It was so absurd that he might have laughed at it and paid no attention to it whatever, but, courteously enough, he passed it on, referring it to the post surgeon for a brief statement of the facts in the case. The post surgeon made this report:

"Post Hospital,
Fort Yates, N. D., Jan. 23, 1891.

"Respectfully returned to the Post Adjutant.

"I received the body of Sitting Bull about 4:30 P. M., on the 16th day of December, 1890, and it was in my custody until it was buried on the 17th. During that time it was not mutilated or disfigured in any manner. I saw the body sewed up in a canvas, put in a coffin and the lid screwed down and afterwards buried in the northwest corner of the post cemetery in a grave about eight feet deep, in the presence of Capt. A. R. Chapin, assistant surgeon U. S. A., Lt. P. G. Wood, 12th Infantry, Post Quartermaster, and myself.

"H. M. DEEBLE,
A. A. Surgeon, U. S. A.,
Post Surgeon."

This was forwarded to me with this additional endorsement:

"Fort Yates, N. D., Jan. 24, 1891.

"Respectfully returned to Indian Agent, James McLaughlin, inviting attention to third endorsement hereon. The grave does not appear to have been disturbed.

"W. F. DRUM,
Lt. Col. 12th Infantry, Commanding Post."

From this it would appear that Sitting Bull was pretty effectually buried and that his body was intact. I returned to the Commissioner the reports with this last endorsement:

"Fort Yates, N. D., Jan. 27, 1891.

"Respectfully returned to the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs inviting attention to the endorsements of the acting Assistant Surgeon and the Commanding Officer at Fort Yates.

"The body of Sitting Bull, together with the dead policeman, was brought to the Agency in the afternoon of December 16th by the police (who were acting under the direction of the military) whence, after depositing the dead policeman, it (Sitting Bull's body) was taken at once by the police, without removal from the wagon in which it was brought from Grand River, to the post of Fort Yates and left there in charge of the military authorities in pursuance of the Division Commander's orders to the Post Commander before the arrest, directing the latter to secure the person of Sitting Bull. I saw Sitting Bull's remains upon arrival at the Agency, and was present in the afternoon of December 17th, 1890, in the Military Cemetery and saw his grave, which had been partly filled with soil before I got there, and I feel confident that he was neither dissected nor scalped before burial and also quite confident that his grave has not been disturbed since.

"JAMES McLAUGHLIN,
U. S. Indian Agent."

That was the official end of Sitting Bull. I have no doubt that his effigy decorated in such garb as would have forever discredited the old medicine man among his followers, has been exhibited for the delectation of the gullible, but I am also very certain that the grave beside which I stood last June, when I was moved to write this story of the bloody end of the turbulent life of Sitting Bull, contained all that death left of the once powerful prophet and leader of the Sioux people.

◆

MY FRIEND THE INDIAN

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

HOW HAWKMAN RODE TO HIS DEATH

A Notable Achievement In Endurance Which Led An Indian Policeman To His Fate

On the Battle Roll of the Sioux Indian Police, Hawkman No. 2, is set down as David Hawkman; in the lodges of the Tetons he is still referred to as "Cetanwicasta," and somewhere in Washington there is pigeon-holed a proposal to give his widow a pension. This last I mention casually and not in the hope of propitiating the pension giving powers, for Hawkman was only an Indian hero and they don't count for much in a time when heroes are made in the marts of trade. Hawkman was shot dead, the first man killed outright, in front of Sitting Bull's house at the time of the latter's arrest, and almost at the instant that the old chief fell. Hawkman had no business there. By all the laws of human nature he should have been sleeping the sleep of the just and the weary, in the consciousness of having performed a most tremendous feat in the accomplishment of a self-imposed duty. But fate, riding in the saddle with Hawkman, led him a mad chase over the trails of the Standing Rock Reservation to his doom. His ride upon that occasion is still talked of by the Standing Rock Sioux and, being naturally fatalists, often relate the ride to death that Hawkman made and just take it for granted that he should have been where he was when the bullet of a crazed ghost dancer found its billet in his breast.

Hawkman lived on the Grand River about four miles east of the camp of Sitting Bull. He had a family—a wife and four children. He was a working Indian and a good man. He had ambitions in the direction of a policeman's uniform and he had realized his ambition insofar that he had been made a special. During the ghost dancing I thought he had been brought under the influence of the prophets of the craze. He lived close enough to Sitting Bull to be easily reached and it is very certain that the Indians who lived in that neighborhood and rejected the domination of the chief and declined to admit the efficacy of his medicine was likely to have a bad time. It is no discredit to the memory of Hawkman for me to say that at that time—during the fall of 1890—I was not inclined to give him the confidence that I gave to Bull Head and Shave Head. The former who was First Lieutenant of the Indian Police had better judgment in the matter than I, and declared that Hawkman could be depended upon. It took some strength of mind for an untutored Indian to reject the ghost dancing religion and its promises, its assurance of an eternity of those good things which most appeal to a savage. And it required moral and physical courage to remain in the same neighborhood with Sitting Bull and yet stand out against him. Therefore, I did not lay it against Hawkman when I heard that he was inclined to give ear to the false prophets. But I did not let him have any part in the surveillance of Sitting Bull, which was under the direction of Lieutenant Bull Head. As a matter of fact, very few of the people—I might say only a couple of those who could be depended upon under any circumstances—knew any of the details of the plan that had been framed to prevent the chief from folding his tents and silently fleeing in the night. Therefore, it came about that Hawkman's part in the affair on the Grand River was entirely casual, so far as human knowledge could go.

The Standing Rock Reservation was then a country of magnificent distances. It is eighty-three miles from the agency to the western boundary of the Reservation, and while none of the Indians had permanent camps at or near the westermost boundary, there were a considerable number who lived more than fifty miles from the Agency. We knew of many who practically spent all their time on the trail between the Agency and their homes coming after their bi-weekly rations. And they would dawdle along the trail with travois or wagons and take a week or nearly a week to come in, then, getting their rations, they would remain around and visit and start home only to arrive there in time to start back from the next beef issue. They could travel with plenty of speed when they wanted to, but it was notorious that a good many of them managed to lead a nomadic life, confined to the boundaries of the Reservation. In the winter this was a fearful trip, and the

This group of men made up the first office force at Standing Rock Indian Reservation at the time Major James McLaughlin took over the duties as Agent of that reservation.
He was assigned there, from Ft. Totten, D.T., for the purpose of keeping Sitting Bull, and other prisoners, under control upon their return from Canada.
Left to right: Joe Primeau (Indian Interpreter). Dr. Hart (Indian Doctor). Major James McLaughlin (Indian Agent). Mr. Browning (Chief Clerk). Jim Marshall (unknown position).
Photo courtesy R. C. McLaughlin.

Standing Rock Agency Officials 1889.
Left to right: Joe Primeau, George Faribault, Dr. E. S. Hart (Agency Physician), James McLaughlin, Bird M. Robinson, Jim Merrill.
Barry photo - Courtesy Assumption Abbey Archives.

sufferings of those who got through storms with their lives pointed the necessity for putting up some sort of shelter for the travelers—a shelter that would permit them to rest in comfort at least one night on the journey. With this object in view, I had made arrangements to put up a station, consisting of a house for wayfarers and shelter for the teams—enough to shed a dozen or so ponies—on Oak Creek, twenty-two miles from the Agency and eighteen miles from Sitting Bull's camp on the Grand River. The logs for this station were being brought out that fall of the Ghost Dancing and this fact was of assistance in deluding Sitting Bull and his people into a sense of security when a detail of police was sent to the station, ostensibly to work on the structure, actually to be within reach when the order was given for the arrest of the medicine man. Hawkman No. 2 was engaged in bringing logs up from the Grand River for the buildings.

He left his home some time during the day of December 13th with a team of oxen drawing a load of logs. He got to Oak Creek rather late in the day and remained there over night. For some reason that was never ascertained he got up very early in the morning of the 14th, hitched up his cattle and started for home. He must have had a very early start, for he was at Grand River, near his own place, about ten o'clock A. M. Upon his arrival at Grand River he was met by Lieutenant Bull Head and told that he was detailed to carry a message to the Agent at Standing Rock. The message was that written by day school teacher, J. M. Carignan, at the suggestion of Bull Head, notifying me that Sitting Bull was preparing to leave the Reservation. Hawkman did not know the nature of the message but was proud of the distinction that the service would give him, doubtless thinking that it would bring nearer to him the coveted honor of the blue uniform and a place on the permanent police roll. He mounted his horse, which was an exceptionally good one, and put the animal through a pace that scorched the ground behind him for the forty miles distance. He was nearly exhausted when he arrived at the Agency, and I sent him to the police quarters giving instructions that he be taken care of and kept there all night. He was very anxious to be doing something, but I was not thinking of sending him back to the river. Moreover I wanted to send

Sergt. Red Tomahawk, whom I was certain could be trusted to carry through the important orders that were going to Lieutenant Bull Head and who was intelligent enough to properly convey the verbal directions.

Hawkman was received at the police quarters with due honor as the bearer of important tidings, though what news he brought remained a problem to the Indians, no man knowing, except those concerned, that orders had been given for the arrest of Sitting Bull.

A good supper was prepared for the courier, but he ate little and talked less. He had the air of a man who was impressed by something that impended, but he knew nothing of the cause of his uneasiness and depression. It was observed by the policeman on duty at their headquarters that he could not rest. There being an air of expectancy about the Agency at the time, no particular attention was paid to Hawkman when, impelled by fate, he went out and got his horse that he had ridden from Grand River, forty miles that day, and mounted and started back on the trail that led him home and then on. He got home during the night, but could not remain there. He got another mount and rode to Bull Head's house, which he found deserted by the police. They had gone on to Gray Eagle's—whose two sisters were married to Sitting Bull, and were presently to be reduced to widowhood. There he found the policemen had started for the camp of Sitting Bull, and full of the inspiration that was leading him on to his death, he followed the trail and caught up with Bull Head's command as the detachment was entering the Sitting Bull camp.

Hawkman rode with the detachment into the camp and, while Sitting Bull was making ready for the journey, he sat in his saddle with the other policemen waiting for the prisoner to be brought out of the house. He was not affected by the flashing eyes and glowering faces of the ghost dancers, who gathered about with rifles in their hands and threatened the police, and no suggestion of fear stirred him when Sitting Bull came forth and began railing, but he brought his Winchester to a ready when Sitting Bull called upon his people to rescue him, and in that moment he died: There were four shots fired in rapid succession, mortally wounding Bull Head and Shave

Head, and killing Sitting Bull, and at the fifth shot Hawkman fell dead. He had ridden not less—rather more—than 120 miles in 22 hours (18 miles of it by ox team) and was in at the death.

I am reminded to state here that my orders for the arrest of Sitting Bull were not carried out to the letter, my verbal instructions to Lieutenant Bull Head being that he take a spring wagon with him when he went to make the arrest so that he might place Sitting Bull in it and leave the camp at once, but in the excitement of the moment the wagon was forgotten. Had a wagon been taken to the camp there might not have been any bloodshed, for it was while waiting for Sitting Bull to change his clothes and have his horse brought from the corral that his followers gathered in front of the house, and were it not for the delay thus occasioned, might have been gotten into a wagon and hurriedly taken away without any bloodshed. As it was, when a wagon was obtained for the purpose of bringing in the bodies of the dead policeman and that of Sitting Bull, there was something like a disagreement, or, as near it as discipline would permit. Sergt. Red Tomahawk, who succeeded to the command of the police after Bull Head had been wounded, had the Lieutenant's instructions to take Sitting Bull into the Agency and it was not his concern that he could not take him in alive. Sitting Bull was dead, but that did not change the letter of the Sergeant's instructions, so he ordered that the body be put into the wagon with the remains of the four Indian policemen who had been killed in the fight. The members of his force demurred, for was he not responsible for the death of their comrades? They objected to having him put in the same wagon with their friends, but Red Tomahawk was obdurate, and insisted upon carrying out Lieutenant Bull Head's order. Finally there was a compromise by the policemen agreeing that Sitting Bull might be taken in with the bodies of the others, provided that he be put in the bottom of the wagon, which was done, with the other bodies being put on the top of him and the ghastly load was brought into the Agency thus, with all that was earthly of Sitting Bull regarded as slightly as though he had never arrogantly taken the first place in following that same trail when he was living.

Speaking of the dead reminds me that out of the death of the hostiles who fell with Sitting Bull, there sprang the foundation of a Christian mission in that settlement on the Grand River. The Indians killed had been allowed to lie unburied. The policemen had no time to bury them and if they had, it is to be doubted that they would have taken the trouble, for, although they were excellent policemen and good soldiers, they were still Indians, and it was no part of their creed to bury the dead of the enemy. Soon after the fight, the Rev. Thomas L. Riggs, a missionary and son of the famous missionary to the Sioux, arrived on the ground. The camp was deserted, the men who survived the fight having betaken themselves out of the way to the south.

Mr. Riggs, after the fashion of the frontier missionary who does that thing which he finds to his hand, assisted by a few Indians who accompanied him, performed the Christian duty of burying the dead. He made a common grave for the seven ghost dancers and put them away decently. There was practically no Christianity in the camp before that day, but the Indians, when they returned, were so impressed by the charitable act, and the further fact that their friends and relatives had been buried by this particular minister of a particular church—the Congregational—that they embraced the faith offered them by him and a very considerable mission was established—all going to show that works, as well as faith, appeal strongly to the red man from a missionary point of view.

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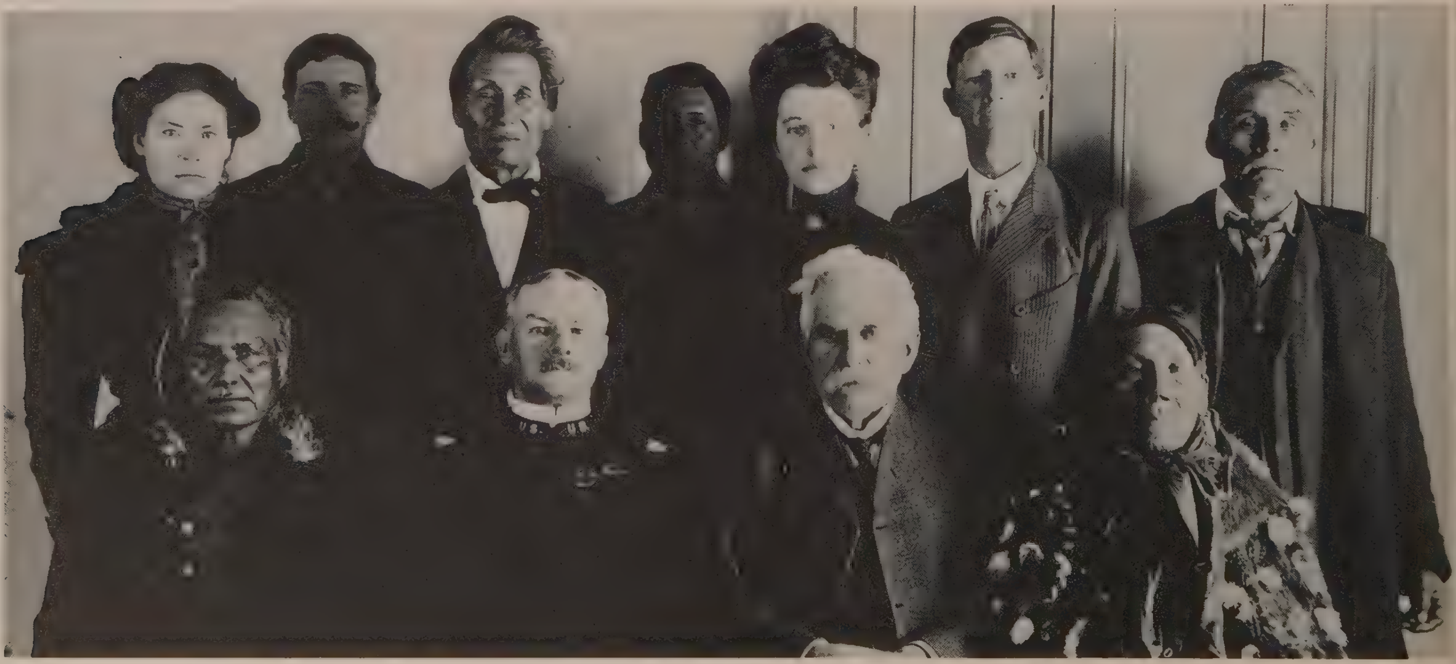
Officials, Chiefs and Interpreters in agreement negotiation at Colville Agency in Washington, December 1, 1905. Bottom row: Chief Antoine, Capt. J. C. Webster, Inspector McLaughlin, Chief Ignace (Eneas). Top row: Sallie Nee, Chief Interpreter; Bob Covington, Assistant Interpreter; Chief Barnaby Nespelem Frank, Assistant Interpreter; Emma J. Peterson, Stenographer; Thos. Nee, Chief Orapahken.
Photo from the collection of R. C. McLaughlin.



In conference at Washington, D.C., Major James McLaughlin standing at the right. Note: (By odd coincidence Albert P. Salisbury, publisher of this book, believes that the seated man at the right is his Grandfather Albert Salisbury who as President of what is now Wisconsin State University at Whitewater, was several times called into conference on Indian problems because of his earlier experience with the American Missionary Association as Superintendent of Schools among the Negroes of the South and the Indians of the West.) Photo from the collection of R. C. McLaughlin.

MY FRIEND THE INDIAN

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SHAVE HEAD'S CODE OF HONOR

The Story Of A Man Of The Hunkpapa Sioux Who Fought Fiercely, Hated Thoroughly, And Died For The White Man

Shave Head was of the Hunkpapas. There have been men of his tribe who were better known to the whiteman. Sitting Bull, whose medicine was not good for the white man, who lurked in the background of all the evil that his people wrought for many a blood drenched year while the Sioux nation was putting up a merciless and dread protest against the usurpation of their hunting grounds by the white invader—Sitting Bull was also of the Hunkpapa. So, too, was Gall, man of brain and brawn, a "good Indian" ere he went to the spirit land and whose recognition of the mission of the white man to lead his people in the way of peace made largely for the good of those of us who lived on the Standing Rock Reservation. So was Crow King, Sitting Bull's lieutenant in the mad flight to Canada after the awful affair on the Little Big Horn, where Custer and his troopers died at the hands of the men of the Dokata nation. And so were Charging Eagle, Black Moon, Spotted Horn Bull, Circling Bear, Rain-in-the-Face—names with which Indians conjured in the days when braves painted for the war-path and the laurels of the field of blood were more regarded than the good will of the Reservation farmer who teaches the arts of peace that red men may live in the sweat of their brows.

All these and many more were of the house of the Hunkpapas and the names of the mispelled terror to the women of the frontier that was and is not, and the men who fought breast to breast with them for the right to live in peace in the land of the Dakotas. Theirs was the place of honor when the Sioux met in great council, theirs the guarded privilege of pitching their tents on the outer edge of the circle of bands, holding watch and ward at the gateway of the camp—and thence their name—Hunkpapa: "The Outer Edge."

And Shave Head was of the Hunkpapas. Disdaining the locks of the red people, his hard head was clipped in the fashion of the white man, yet no young man of his village taunted him because he wore no scalp lock, for he was quick in reprisal and none dared say that Shave Head's heart was soft in his dealings with a foe. As a hunter, and one whose word might be depended upon, he arrived at man's estate, and lived in peace until that day when Red Thunder, of the Yanktonais, crossed him at the beef issue.

In those days the hearts of the Sioux were not much inclined to the ways of the white man. The rations they took—when they hungered—and they listened to the promises of the white father, but they made no sign. And they liked the beef issue, for it was then permitted them to kill the beeves after their own fashion, one beast for every thirty souls, and the head man of each thirty divided the beef according to the right of might.

The Agency had but recently been moved to Standing Rock from the Grand River, and the beef issue took place on the east bank of the Missouri, where now sits the dying village of Winnona—the day of its prosperity faded into twilight with the passing of the Fort Yates Garrison. The turgid tide of the Missouri rolled its muddy flood between the Agency and the cattle corral, and the red men passed over to the north of Cat Tail Creek for the beef cattle they killed to their liking. And with them went Red Thunder, Bully and Bravo, with seven dead men waiting with the other ghosts for his spirit to pass over to the place of the shades and to point him out as a murderer of his kind. The old men turned their backs on Red Thunder and the young men passed him by or did his bidding, for his gun was ever ready and his knife within reach. In the fulness of his ruffian life was Red Thunder, and no man called him friend, even among his own people of the Lower Yanktonais.

Up and down the river the people covered the soft grass lands of the Missouri bottom. Men and women worked at the killing. Each head man of the thirty persons took his animal and rejoiced in the killing as he might have rejoiced in killing Pte, the buffalo. And Shave Head worked manfully at the cutting up of the beef that had fallen to his portion and joked with his friends as he made the division.

PALLBEARERS (Major James McLaughlin funeral) left to right: A. C. Wells (Pioneer Trader and Rancher). Red Tomahawk (Indian Policeman and slayer of Sitting Bull). E. C. Witzleben (Supt. of Indian Schools). H. F. Douglas (Railroad Pioneer). Rev. Reed (Episcopalian Indian Missionary). J. M. Carigan (Indian Trader and Indian Agent). Wm. McNider (Business and Real Estate in Winona, N.D.). D. F. Barry (Noted Indian and Army Photographer). Sam Brugier (Indian Farm Agent and Pioneer Freighter). I. P. Baker (Pioneer Banker). Photo from the collection of R. C. McLaughlin.

Into four quarters was the beef divided and the women rejoiced for the meat was fat and wholesome. "When Shave Head picks the beef, his eye is true and his choice makes our hearts glad," said an old woman and the people made their approval. Then a shadow fell on Shave Head and Red Thunder stood between him and the sun. The people, men, women, and children, fell away for Red Thunder was not good to look at. His hands and arms were smeared with blood, over his left shoulder was the double-barrelled shotgun that was inseparable from him since his last killing has put him at feud with the relatives of Yellow Eyes, who was found lying dead with his face in the pool he had been drinking from when the enemy shot him in the back. His blanket hung loosely from his shoulders and he dragged a quarter of beef with his right hand. Shave Head looked up, but said no word until Red Thunder, letting go of the quarter of beef he was dragging, seized one of those belonging to the party of thirty in which Shave Head shared. The youth, who was of fair proportions, arose immediately to his feet. The blanket that hung on his shoulders was his only garment except the breech cloth and his moccasins. As he arose, his hand closed over the Winchester that lay on the ground beside him.

"Why does Red Thunder lay his hands on my beef?" demanded Shave Head.

"Because Red Thunder sees that it is better than his own," sneered the brave.

"The beef is mine," said Shave Head.

"Red Thunder takes that which looks best to him," rejoined the other, and an evil look came over his face that made the women and children who had stood about Shave Head fall away from the pair standing over the beef.

"You must put down my beef," said Shave Head, and the people looked for the rash young man to fall dead when Red Thunder's weapon spoke. Since the first beef issue at Standing Rock Agency, Red Thunder had helped himself to the fattest and best quarter and no man had said him nay before. Thirty of the weaker ones might share a beef, but a quarter was Red Thunder's share and he was hated for a glutton as he was feared as a murderer.

"Why don't you take your beef," sneered the marauder.

"I will," said Shave Head, and the people turned their faces away that they might not see him die. The blanket slipped from Shave Head's shoulders and he bounded high in the air and backwards as the gun of Red Thunder fell naturally into the hollow of his arm, his finger on the trigger. Shave Head jumped about as one possessed and the women shrieked as the young man drew the fire of the evil-eyed killer. Twice the shotgun spoke; the range was point blank, but the spirits of the men he had murdered, as the Indians believed, turned away the weapon of Red Thunder. The stare of amazement he fixed on Shave Head as he saw him stand still unharmed, changed into the grin of death as the Winchester of Shave Head rang out and Red Thunder, the killer, pitched on his face. Shave Head walked up to his body and emptied the fifteen remaining shots into the prostrate form.

The thing was done, the slayer was slain, and no man could say that Shave Head might be blamed. But the code of the Dakota's did not permit that a man might be slain by arms and his relatives allow the slayer to go unscathed. Shave Head thought fast in that instant, and the thing he did saved him for a nobler death in a worthier cause. He filled the magazine of his gun, then before the Yanktonais, the brethern of Red Thunder, could act, he retreated to the top of a hill to the south and sitting there, taunted them.

"Red Thunder is dead," he shouted, "I killed him. Had he twenty lives I would take them all. Where is his brother or his cousin? Let them come and take the life of the slayer." Yet none offered him fight and they took the body of Red Thunder and built a scaffold near the mouth of Cat Tail Creek, close by the shores of the Missouri, and there they laid the killer, making provision for his dark journey. Pipes and tobacco and meat they placed by the body and white men and red men passing up and down the Missouri pointed to the lone body on the high place at the mouth of the Cat Tail and said, "Red Thunder is dead, and no one grieves."

And the heart of Shave Head was bad and bitter against the memory of the man who had caused him to become a slayer before the women and children, even though the deed was a deed of justice, and for many years when the people of the Agency heard that Shave Head had money, they listened for the speaking of a Winchester. For Shave Head kept alive the memory of his wrong and his deed of justice by buying a box of cartridges when he had the silver with which to purchase the same, going alone and quietly across the Missouri and firing sixteen shots through the remains of him that was Red Thunder—and this he did from time to time until scaffold and bones fell down to the earth and the ashes of Red Thunder mingled with the dust out of which the Great Spirit formed the man.

In the bitter gloom of a winter morning, Shave Head laid down his life for duty's sake. For weeks Sitting Bull had been making medicine that augered no good for the white people, which kept him to his camp on the Grand River. Kicking Bear with his evangelistic story of a journey to the end of the earth and an ascent to heaven; the promise that had been given him that the earth would be covered with a sea of mud that would engulf the white man and leave the Indian free to roam the designated high places, teeming with buffalo, had caught the fancy or fired the ambition of the old chief. With his people he had been dancing the ghost dance for many days and his band was ready to follow him to the place of the coming of the Messiah, even though the trail followed the warpath. And Sitting Bull and his camp on the Grand River was fast locked in the sleep of exhaustion that followed days and nights of dancing and fasting.

Shave Head, steadfast in his likes and dislikes, had elected to follow the white man. I, being then the Indian Agent, had sent to Bull Head, who was the Lieutenant of Police, an order to arrest Sitting Bull and bring him to the Agency. Shave Head was Bull Head's first Sergeant and he knew no law but the word of the father at the Agency and order of Bull Head.

Just about seven o'clock on the morning of December 15, 1890, Bull Head, with Shave Head at his side and a group of Indian policemen at his back, rode into the camp of Sitting Bull. The log houses were dark, even the dogs made no sound. The officers of the police entered the house of Sitting Bull and awakened him. The old chief was told that he must go to the Agency. He acquiesced in his arrest, but said he desired to dress in his best clothes, which were in another cabin a few yards distant, and his younger wife was sent to get the garments. This, together with his dressing, consumed about twenty minutes, giving his followers, who were all camped near by, time to assemble and gather around the building. Bull Head and his men led Sitting Bull out of the house into the middle of the throng of Indians of Sitting Bull's band and when they appeared outside, a menacing cry went up from the throats of the ghost dancers and their eyes, red with the fatigue of the frenzied dance, shot fire at Bull Head and Shave Head. In time of action the men of the Sioux do not parley. Catch the Bear, one of Sitting Bull's men, and upon Sitting Bull's order, raised his gun and shot Bull Head through the body. The lieutenant of police fell, and in falling, wheeled around and shot Sitting Bull in the left side. About the same instant, Strikes the Kettle, another of the ghost dancers, shot Shave Head, giving the Sergeant his death wound and his fighting was over; Bull Head, Shave Head, and Sitting Bull all falling together within a few feet of each other.

In that moment it was well for the whites and the red men of peace and the Indian police, that they had been drilled to the knowledge of swift attack.

After Bull Head and Shave Head had been wounded, command of the police detachment devolved upon Red Tomahawk, who signally distinguished himself that morning as narrated in Chapter XII.

The best of the fighting men of the Sioux were they and even while the smoke from Strikes the Kettle's gun still mingled with the steam of their breath, there was a fierce fusillade and when it was over, the men of Sitting Bull's band were running for the timber and five other policemen besides Shave Head and Bull Head lay on the ground, their blood an atonement for the deeds of their people. And eight of Sitting Bull's band would dance no more.

After being brought forty miles in an ambulance, 1st Sergeant Shave Head was still alive when he was carried into the Agency's Hospital; from a frightful wound in the pelvis, his vitals protruded and his hours were numbered. But his mind was clear and he forgot neither friend or foe. And his pain was forgotten when he saw the white men, doctors and Agency officials, standing about his bedside and weeping, knowing that he would soon be dead. He beckoned to me to stoop over him.

"Did I do well, father," said Shave Head, and I could only nod, for the tightening in my throat choked me.

"Then I will die in the faith of the white men and to which my five children already belong, and be with them. Send for my wife, that we may be married by the Black Gown before I die."

And a white man was put on a swift horse and sent for the wife of Shave Head, 18 miles distant, that he might be married to her after the custom of the whites and die in peace. Shave Head had hitherto held to the faith of his fathers and, although he had given his children to the Black Gowns, he had all his life declined the invitation to become a member himself, for he was a man of strong heart and strong head, and no weakling to be moved by argument that he did not fully understand. But he saw that the days of the Indian and his tribal customs of marriage were over and he would wed according to the white man's rite the mother of his children and profess the white man's faith.

But death, riding a swifter steed than that given to the wife of Shave Head, came first to the side of the bed in the hospital. Day was breaking over the buttes east of the Missouri when Shave Head opened his eyes and asked if his wife had come and was told that she would arrive in a quarter of an hour.

"It will be too late," he said. Then to me, "Did I do my duty?" He was told that he had done well and that the whites would not forget him. "It is well," he said, and Shave Head turned his face to the wall and died.

Fifteen minutes later the wife of Shave head wailed her lamentations at the door of the hospital and the whites, who owed much to her husband, solaced her. A granite shaft was erected at the head of Shave Head's grave to perpetuate the memory of this man who hated fiercely, loved well, and kept the faith to the death. And Shave Head's widow sits in her cabin on Standing Rock Reservation nursing the fragment of a hope that the Great Council of the whites will some day keep faith and give her a place on the pension rolls as the widow of a good soldier.

EPILOGUE

When his book appeared in 1910, Inspector McLaughlin was already 68, but he still had thirteen years of service left ahead of him to devote to his Indian friends. To Indians and Department employees alike he was the Grand Old Man of the Indian Service. His flowing white hair and mustache were symbolic of his wisdom and experience, and the special inflection in the voices of his friends in mentioning his name revealed their veneration for him. His experience was such that even after the Major reached eighty the Secretary begged him to remain in the service.

In the last decade of his life he finally found a superior with a kindred soul in Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior under President Wilson. Lane espoused "lock, stock and barrel" McLaughlin's plan as expressed in Chapter XXI, "Give the Red Man His Portion." Accordingly, from 1915 to 1920, McLaughlin was engaged in an extensive program of giving the Indians their funds impounded in the Treasury and the right to manage their own property. Both men agreed that the past policy of doing all the thinking and managing for the Indians was robbing them of their manhood and reducing them to the status of shiftless children. With many of the Indians it had become a way of life already and a change in policy came too late to remedy the damage done to their characters. It was not surprising, therefore, that the McLaughlin-Lane liberation plan did not live up to their expectations. Time has shown, however, that a continuation of old system and a delay of the liberation program was not beneficial in the long run.

My Friend the Indian does not begin to tell of McLaughlin's work for his Indian friends. Fortunately, at his death in 1923, he left behind voluminous correspondence covering the 52 years of his service among the Indians. The collection was stored in the home of his son, Rupert Sibley McLaughlin, in McLaughlin, South Dakota. Usher L. Burdick acquired most of the collection from the family in the Thirties and Forties and donated it to Assumption Abbey in Richardton, North Dakota. In 1967, Assumption College received a grant from the Louis W. and Maud Hill Family Foundation to gather the remaining portion of the papers from members of the family, mostly from Robert C. McLaughlin and James M. Fenelon. The collection was catalogued and all 30,000 pages were microfilmed. Under the grant, Assumption Abbey Archives also published a descriptive pamphlet (free copies available) entitled: **Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Major James McLaughlin Papers**.

At present (November, 1969), I am about ready to submit to a publisher my manuscript on the life of Major McLaughlin, and, hopefully, it will be printed in 1970. The biography attempts to describe in some detail the half century of service McLaughlin dedicated to the welfare of the American Indian.

Rev. Louis L. Pfaller, O.S.B.,
Assumption College,
Richardton, North Dakota.

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McLaughlin
My friend the Indian.

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